

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE
D.D., EDIN.

THE JEWS IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY
THE GENTILES IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY
THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

NEW POPULAR EDITION

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

WITH REFERENCE TO
THE JEWS, THE GENTILES, AND
THE CHURCH OF GOD

BY THE REV.

W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE
D.D.(EDIN.)

WITH FOREWORD BY

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FOREWORD

In these days of such momentous event, the hearts of many are anxiously seeking for some clear setting forth of the place of current happenings in the scheme of the Prophetic Word. The best answer to this longing is not in any speculative theories, but in a calm survey of the Word of God in regard to His declared and unchanging Will. For its history unfolds the persistent purpose which was from the beginning; and its prophecy, both in its fulfilled and yet unfulfilled aspects, declares the ultimate triumph of that purpose over all that still exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Therein is the secure peace of His people.

Dr. Graham Scroggie has done an invaluable service to the "plain man" in presenting the following Studies. They afford a comprehensive and well-balanced view of Truth which cannot fail to confirm and to inspire hope. For they show clearly and

convincingly that the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is the necessary and imminent completion of the circle of Grace ; supporting this contention by the clear teaching of Revelation, and unerringly pointing out the implicates of this purifying hope to the Church of God. This is a book whose value is altogether out of proportion to its size, and for which many will be profoundly grateful.

J. STUART HOLDEN.

CONTENTS

PART A

THE JEWS IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE PAST PRIVILEGES OF THE JEWS .	3
(1) The Calling of the Nation . .	5
(2) The Constitution of the Nation . .	9
(3) The Course of the Nation . .	15
II. THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JEWS .	27
(1) The Jews viewed Nationally . .	28
(2) The Jews viewed Individually . .	33
(3) The Jews viewed Spiritually . .	35
III. THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE JEWS	40
(1) Their Temporary Rejection . .	40
(2) Their Permanent Restoration . .	43
(3) Their Messiah-Redeemer . .	47

PART B

THE GENTILES IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

I. THE AGE OF GENTILE REJECTION .	55
(1) The Gentiles and Jehovah . .	56
(2) The Gentiles and the Covenant . .	60
(3) The Gentiles and Israel . .	61

CHAP.	PAGE
II. THE AGE OF GENTILE DOMINION .	67
(1) The Times of the Gentiles .	67
(2) The Engrafting of the Gentiles .	72
(3) The Fulness of the Gentiles .	76
III. THE AGE OF GENTILE CONVERSION .	79
(1) The Great Tribulation .	79
(2) The Second Advent of Christ .	86
(3) The Millennial Age .	91

PART C

THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

I. THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH .	105
(1) In the Old Testament .	105
(2) In the Gospels .	116
(3) In the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse .	126
II. THE EXPECTATION OF THE CHURCH .	141
(1) The Foundation of our Hope .	141
(2) The Foreshadowing of our Hope .	143
(3) The Fulfilment of our Hope .	148
III. THE OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH .	150
(1) The Obligation to Know .	150
(2) The Obligation to Be .	151
(3) The Obligation to Do .	151

PART A



**THE JEWS
IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY**

Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, and from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

MOSES.

CHAPTER I

The Past Privileges of the Jews

In 1 Corinthians x. 32, we find a divine analysis of the human race: "the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God." That is comprehensive, all-embracing; and all men, in every age, come under one or other of these categories. This analysis is not human, but Divine; and it is a key to the understanding of God's dispensational plan and purpose throughout the entire course of human history. Not a few heresies are the direct outcome of denial or ignorance of God's dispensational purposes. History is not a heap of stones, but a mosaic; not an accumulation of unrelated events, but the out-working of an eternal purpose. History, it has been well said, is His-Story.

The subject of the Jews in Prophecy and History must first claim our attention, as

they play the largest part in the unfolding of human story. In the present chapter we shall consider their Past Privileges.

The termini of the period represented by this heading may be variously fixed. Actually, they may be said to be, at the one end, the Call of Abram; and at the other end, the Crucifixion. But virtually they are, at the one end, the Failure of Adam; and at the other end, the Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. All the dispensations overlap, and the remembrance of this will save us from confusion and error.

In order to understand and appreciate the past privileges of Israel, we must consider their Calling, Constitution, and Career. Their **Calling** covers the period from Adam to Moses; their **Constitution** is co-terminus with the period of Moses; and their **Career** extends from Moses to Christ. Each of these periods has its focal fact. Of Israel's **Calling**, the focal fact is the Covenant; of their **Constitution**, it is the Law; and of their **Career**, it is the Kingdom. Bearing these broad distinctions in mind, let us look at each somewhat more closely.

(1) THE CALLING OF THE NATION
From Adam to Moses. Centring in the Covenant.—What then, may we ask, was—

(i) **The Cause**, or Occasion, of the Covenant?—The answer to this question will be found in the course of events from Adam to Abram, a period in duration longer than the Christian Age, and one during which there was neither Jew nor Gentile. In the course of this period man was thrice put on probation, and under circumstances which fairly tested what human nature was, and could do—or, rather, what it was not, and could not do. First, there was the failure of man in **Innocence**. The circumstances of his probation necessitated one of two issues—holiness or sin; and by Adam's disobedience "sin entered into the world, and death by sin." In consequence of this, he was expelled from Eden. Then followed a long period during which man was left to the dictates of **Conscience**, not being under law, human or Divine (cf. Gen. iv. 23-24). What was the outcome of this, a reading of Genesis chapters four to six will reveal. The earliest fragment of poetry preserved to us is in cele-

bration of murder, for which no penalty was exacted. Wickedness increased in the earth, until "it repented the Lord that He had made man." Thus, left to themselves, every man did that which was right in his own eyes; and God visited them for their sins.

Hereafter when those "eight souls" emerged upon the new earth, they were placed under government—human and Divine. A comparison of the Covenants of Genesis, chapters one and nine, will prove most instructive, and will reveal that in the latter there is a change of dispensation. But sin, which was taken into the ark, was also brought out of it, and soon manifested itself, specifically in Ham, and generally in the Babel combine; and this period also was brought to a close in judgment. So far, man had utterly failed, the precipitancy of his downward course increasing with the centuries. Man's wilful disobedience ended in expulsion from the Garden; his moral perversion ended in his destruction by flood; and his organised rebellion ended in the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of

the race. In each of these dispensations man was given an opportunity to work out his own salvation, but without success; and **it is this triple failure on his part which is the cause, or occasion of the Abrahamic Covenant.**

(ii.) **The Character**, or Terms, of the Covenant.—We may say, first of all, that it was a Covenant of **Promise**. Man having failed under the previous tests, God now unveils a purpose that rests upon His grace and power, and is thus independent of human failure. Promises in Scripture are of two kinds, conditional and unconditional. In the case of the former, fulfilment depends upon human as well as Divine faithfulness; but in the case of the latter, upon the faithfulness of God alone. The Abrahamic Covenant belongs to this latter class.

Further, we may say, it was a Covenant of **Prosperity**, and of prosperity in ever widening circles—Individual, Domestic, National, and Universal (Gen. xii. 1-3, xxii. 17, 18). The Lord said, “I will bless thee”; that is Individual: “I will make thy name great”;

that is Domestic: "I will make of thee a great nation"; that is National: and, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"; that is Universal. We might observe in passing, that, whereas the promise was from the centre, "Abram," to the circumference, the "world"; God's command of Abram to go forth, was, in the reverse order, from what was outermost, his "country," to what was innermost, his "father's house." Yet, again, it was a Covenant of **Possession**. There was to be a Sphere of **possession**—the Land (Gen. xiii. 14-17, xv. 18-21); there was to be a Seed of **perpetuity**—the Christ (Gen. xii. 7, Gal. iii. 16); and there was to be a Shield of **protection**—Jehovah (Gen. xv. 1). Thus, like the Decalogue, the Abrahamic Covenant is worldwide in its scope, and has its fulfilment in every age. And mark now—

(iii.) **The Confirmation**, or Sureness, of the Covenant.—The Promise made to Abram was repeated to Isaac, and to Jacob, who, on this account, are the Covenant-patriarchs. That which, in the first instance, was given of **Grace** (Gen. xii. 1-3), was afterwards rati-

fied by **Sacrifice** (Gen. xv. 17), and finally sealed with **an Oath** (Gen. xxii. 16). The importance of this last circumstance consists in the fact that, while God's word with an oath is not surer than His word without it, yet, the adding of an oath is an indication that the purpose so sworn to is subject neither to modification nor abandonment (cf. Heb. vii. 21, xii. 24; Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35, 36). The Abrahamic Covenant, therefore, is indestructible; its terms must be spiritually and literally fulfilled. Consider now—

(2) THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NATION

Time of Moses. Centring in the Law.—The Constitution of the Israelitish nation may be regarded, in a sense, as going on throughout the whole period of their Egyptian servitude (Gen. xlv. 3, 4, xlvii. 27), though, more properly, it took place at Sinai. The period of Israel's history, covered by Exodus to Deuteronomy, is of the greatest importance, to themselves, to the Church, and to the Race. There are three main movements in the story; and first,—

(i.) **The Removal to Egypt** (Gen. chs.

xlvi.-l.).—Israel was a family of seventy souls, and not a nation, when Jacob went down into Egypt; but during the two hundred and fifteen years of their sojourn there, they were Divinely protected, and abundantly increased, until, at the time of Moses' birth, they had "waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them." Then follows:—

(ii.) **The Redemption from Bondage** (Ex. chs i.-xviii.).—The graphic record of Moses has made this part of Israel's history amongst the best-known stories in the world. There is, first of all, the **Persecution of the People**, and the efforts of Rameses II. to destroy the nation by murdering all the male babes (Ex. ch. i.). Following this is the **Preparation of a Saviour**, the birth, training, and commission of Moses to be the deliverer of his people (Ex. chs. ii.-iv.). Then, in a section full of spiritual significance, the **Plan and Progress of Redemption** are set forth; wherein it is revealed that the battle between Moses and Pharaoh was, in reality, a conflict between God and the Powers of Darkness, and that redemption was wrought for the

oppressed by the shedding of blood (Ex. v. 1-xii. 36). Finally, there is the **Pilgrimage to Sinai**. During the two months which it took Israel to reach Horeb, God revealed Himself to His people as equal to their every need, guiding, saving, providing, governing, and giving victory. It was not, of course, until after deliverance from Egyptian bondage that the Israelites were definitely constituted a nation, as it was not until after Calvary that the saved were constituted a Church. The final movement in this part of the story is—

(iii.) **The Revelation at Sinai** (Ex. xix. 1-Num. x. 10).—The emphasis in Scripture is laid upon what is **moral**, rather than upon what is **historical**. This accounts for the fact that, while nearly eighteen hundred years of the world's history are condensed in the first six chapters of Genesis, no less than fifty-eight chapters are devoted to the events of a single year of Israel's story, the year which they spent at Sinai. This is, probably, the most momentous year in the history of the race, seeing that its events give direction and colour to all subsequent

dealings of God with man. Four things of the greatest importance claim our attention at this point.

(a) **The Revelation of the Law.**— By this is meant the revelation contained in, and produced by the Law, a revelation of Divine righteousness, and of human depravity; of what, in holiness, God requires; and of what man, because of sin, is unable to render. In the giving of these Commandments there was nothing arbitrary. They reflect what God essentially is, and requires; and aback of the local and the temporary injunctions designed for Israel, lie broad and eternal principles, which apply equally to them and to us. God had not one law for that age and another for this: His requirements are as consistent as His character. Calvary was on Sinai, and Sinai was on Calvary. His **holiness** and His **love** are present on both Mounts; but on Sinai chiefly as Righteousness, and on Calvary chiefly as Grace.

(b) **The Institution of the Tabernacle.**— Here the teaching is peculiarly rich and full, alike with regard to its names, origin, form, history, and significance. The spiritual

truth for which pre-eminently the Tabernacle stood was the Presence of God among His people. The Divine immanence was reflected in the Shekinah Glory, and the entire Tabernacle was an anticipation of Him Who was to become flesh and tabernacle among us.

(c) The Ordination of the Priesthood.—The entire idea of Priesthood, true or false, is rooted in the human consciousness of sin, and of need of mediation. The idea did not originate at Sinai, nor exhaust itself in the dispensation there inaugurated. When we take a view of this institution across the whole surface of Scripture, we discover at least four distinct periods, marking four distinct aspects of the subject:—(1) In the Pre-Mosaic Age—Family Priesthood. (2) In the Mosaic Age—State Priesthood. (3) In the Christian Age—Church Priesthood. (4) In the Millennial Age—Universal Priesthood. These truths are most important, and spiritually rich. We see then that at Sinai, State Priesthood was instituted. In the first case, the head of each family acted as priest, during the primeval and patri-

archal periods. In the second, the office was delegated exclusively to the tribe of Levi, and was handed down from father to son. This lasted to the end of the Jewish dispensation. From this time forward, a spiritual priesthood is exhibited, in which every believer is a sharer with his risen Lord. And this, again, is followed by the priesthood of the yet future Millennial period, a priesthood on the basis of the Levitical office, but differing from it in this, that it will be world-wide in its application. The importance of all this cannot be over-estimated by the Bible student, for it lies at the base of all true interpretation of Scripture.

(d) **The Prescription of the Offerings.**—The Book of Leviticus is the Priests' Code, and enforces two great truths. First, that the way to God is only by **Sacrifice**; and, second, that, the walk with God is only by **Sanctification**; thus, "offering," and "clean," are the key-words of the Book. The content of the Passover is unfolded in Leviticus. The Passover tells of the redeeming **fact**; but in the Offerings we have the redeeming **doctrine**. Taking these institutions together,

a wonderful field of spiritual truth is opened to us. In the Passover is seen the **Ground** of Redemption; in the Law, the **Need** of Redemption; in the Tabernacle, the **Medium** of Redemption; in the Priesthood, the **Maintenance** of Redemption; and in the Offerings, the **Doctrine** of Redemption. The first tells of the Divine **Grace**; the second, of the Divine **Will**; the third, of the Divine **Presence**; the fourth, of the Divine **Faithfulness**; and the fifth, of the Divine **Holiness**. "Lo, these are parts of His ways."

Having considered the Calling and Constitution of Israel, we must now review—

(3) THE COURSE OF THE NATION.

Their **Calling** brought us down to Moses; their **Constitution** was in the time of Moses; and their **Course**, or career, brings us down to Christ, so far as their **past privileges** are concerned. The focal fact of their Calling was **the Covenant**. The focal fact of their Constitution was **the Law**. Now we shall see that the focal fact of their Course is **the Kingdom**. The Books to be studied are from Exodus to John inclusive; and the per-

iod covered is about fifteen hundred years. This lengthy history is crowded with detail, and should be studied with the greatest care.¹ The story falls into three main parts. In the first of these, God was Israel's Ruler; in the second, they had kings from among themselves; and in the third, they were governed by foreigners. This, then, is our outline.

(i) THE AGE OF THE THEOCRACY, or, the Rule of God.—This period extends from Moses to Saul, nearly five-and-a-half centuries, and may be divided according to **location**, or **administration**. If according to **location**, we must consider Israel, **(a)** in Egypt; **(b)** in the Wilderness; and **(c)** in the Land. If according to **administration**, we must consider them **(a)** under Moses; **(b)** under Joshua; and **(c)** under Judges. In pursuance of the latter, let us recall the chief events in the history.

(a) Israel under Moses (Exod.-Deut.).—The fortunes of Israel greatly changed in the

¹ For detailed treatment of this period, see *The Fascination of Old Testament Story*, and of the Primeval and Patriarchal periods, *Bible Story and Study*: by the same Author; both of which are now to be had in one volume.

time of Moses. From being a race of slaves in Egypt, they became a great nation, with a fully organised host of fighting men. We follow them from Egypt to Sinai, two months of wonderful pilgrimage. We remain with them at Sinai for nearly a year, during which time, as we have seen, the nation was constituted and organised. We then, in imagination, march with them from Sinai to Kadesh; witness their wicked rebellion there; and see them turn back into the wilderness, to wander listlessly for thirty-eight years. We accompany the new generation back to Kadesh, and on to the Plains of Moab, where Moses delivers his great orations, and dies. It has been the testing and sifting period of the nation, and is full of typical significance and spiritual suggestiveness.

(b) Israel under Joshua (Josh.).—Now the young warrior, who fought against Amalek, assumes command; and the task he has to accomplish, under God, in the out-working of Israel's history, is to bring them into the Promised Land, and to divide it among the Tribes. It is a thrilling narrative,

and their entering, conquering, and possessing, are full of encouragement and warning.

(c) **Israel under Judges** (Judg., Ruth, 1 Sam. chs. i.-vii.).—After the death of Joshua, the people entered upon a long and chequered experience. They had failed to drive out all their enemies; and in consequence, according to prophecy, these became scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. The story has a definite frame, which appears seven times in the substance of the Book, and is the key to its structure. First of all, Israel **sinned**, in consequence of which they were taken into **servitude**, wherein, because of their hard lot, they made **supplication** to God, who raised up a judge to bring them **salvation**. There were fifteen such judges, if Abimelech be included, eight of whom came into special prominence, and of these, the greatest were Deborah, Gideon, and Samuel. These were times of sad declension, the character of which is reflected in the stories of Micah and his priest, and of the Levite and his Concubine. But God has never left Himself without a witness; and so, in the midst of this stagnant pond of infidelity and

immorality, we find the sweet water-lilies of Ruth's piety and purity, and Samuel's faithful ministry.

(ii) THE AGE OF THE MONARCHY, or, the Rule of Kings.— This period extends from Saul to Zedekiah, nearly five hundred years, and may be divided according to the state of the Kingdom at different times. Thus, we have—

(a) The United Kingdom—Saul to Solomon.—During this time there were three kings, each of whom reigned over Israel for forty years—Saul, the choice of the people; David, the man after God's own heart; and Solomon, an extraordinary blend of the other two. The study of these three characters is of the utmost importance—especially that of David, by whom the Kingdom was established, who received the covenant of its perpetuity, and who himself was the ancestor and type of the true Messiah, Who shall yet fulfil that covenant in person, and here on earth. It would seem that we have in miniature, in the United Kingdom story, a picture of all history in its three great epochs, viewed from the Divine standpoint—Saul's reign,

and Jewish history—**Apostate**; David's reign, and Church history—**Militant**; Solomon's reign, and Millennial history—**Triumphant**!

(b) **The Divided Kingdom**—Rehoboam to Hoshea.—After Solomon's death, the folly of his son led to the disruption of the nation, and a new centre of rule and worship was started. Here is the summary of the facts:-

(1) **The Northern Kingdom**, with its centre first at Shechem and then at **Samaria**; composed of **Ten Tribes**; and ruled over by **nineteen kings**, who were distributed between **nine dynasties**. These tribes were eventually taken away captive by **Shalmaneser** into **Assyria**, and never returned.

(2) **The Southern Kingdom**, with its centre at **Jerusalem**—composed of **Two Tribes**, and remnants of the Ten; ruled over by **nineteen kings** and one queen, all of the **same dynasty**. These tribes were taken away captive by **Nebuchadnezzar** into **Babylonia**, one hundred and thirty-five years after the captivity of the Ten, and returned in large numbers.

The history of these Kingdoms is recorded from three points of view—the **royal**, in the Books of Kings; the **priestly**, in the Books of Chronicles; and the **prophetic**, in the Books of the Prophets. These records should not be read consecutively, but in parallel columns; and reading them thus, careful attention should be given to four things.

First. The relation of the Kingdoms to God.—

The test is fourfold—(a) their Subjection to God's Word; (b) their Recourse to God in Prayer; (c) their Antagonism to Evil; and (d) their Pursuance of the Good. By this test, we find that all the kings of the North were bad; eleven of the South were bad, four were indifferent, four were good; and of these last four, not one had a stainless record in respect of the test.

Second. The relation of the Kingdoms to One Another.—There were, first of all, nearly sixty years of antagonism between them; then, eighty years of worldly alliance; and, finally, one hundred and eighteen years of bitter antagonism again. Their ideals and

hopes were not the same. Judah, with all her sin, was nevertheless in the line of the Divine purpose; but Ephraim was not, and so there could not be real and abiding agreement.

Third. The relation of the Kingdoms to the Nations.—We see that Israel was weak in the degree in which it had fellowship with the surrounding peoples; we see how God used these peoples for the chastisement of Israel; and we learn much of the Divine ways with, and purposes for, these peoples themselves.

Fourth. The relation of the Kingdoms to the Prophets.—The Books of the Kings give the outward history of Israel; but the Prophets portray their inward history. This two hundred and fifty years of Jewish story, in the divided kingdom period, should be most carefully studied in order to an understanding of the working of the principles of good and evil among the Chosen People, and its historic significance. Now we come to—

(3) The Single Kingdom—Hezekiah to Zedekiah.—Of the six kings of this period,

two were good, and endeavoured to lead Judah in the path of righteousness and truth. The reformations under Hezekiah and Josiah did all it was possible for man to do to stay the tide of Jewish apostasy ; but it was flowing by this time with such force that the best endeavours were of no avail. During this period God sent Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and others, to endeavour to lead the people to repentance, in order that He might not smite them by the hand of the Chaldeans. But it was of no use. The threats and promises of the prophets, as also the two reformations referred to, proved insufficient to arrest the downward rush of the sin-laden people, who now hastened with awful precipitancy to the predicted goal of the disobedient. The Southern Kingdom, therefore, shared the fate of the Northern, and its people were, first, brought into subjection to Babylon, and finally carried captives thither. This brings us to:—

(iii.) THE AGE OF THE DEPENDENCY, or, The Rule of Aliens.—

From the overthrow of Zedekiah, the Jews remained in captivity for

fifty years, at the end of which time the Persian Empire succeeded the Babylonian, and Cyrus issued a decree permitting the Jews to return to Palestine. This they did in large numbers, under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. But the monarchy was not re-established. The Jews remained under foreign rule, and the priest became the dominant person in the nation. Some of the most thrilling chapters in Jewish history fall in the interval between Nehemiah and the advent of the Christ. During this period the Persian power was succeeded by the Grecian, and the Grecian by the Roman. Then, when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son. The long period of Israel's national history, which we have had under review, served a double purpose.

(1) **Preparation was being made for the Coming of the Christ.**—First, by the **Separation** of Israel from all the nations of the earth; they were fenced around, geographically, by the sea, desert, and mountains; and, morally, by the law. This was the period of their schooling, in preparation for the time

when they should teach. **Second**, by the **Dispersion** of Israel throughout the nations of the earth, that they might be lines of Divine communication to the Gentile peoples. Neander, Schaff, and others have shown what an important part this dispersion played in the promulgation of the Good News, and how the Jew and the Synagogue served the Divine ends in the fulness of the time. But further—

(2) **Revelation was being given of the Purposes of God.**—The periods of separation and dispersion were both periods of **Revelation**, and that revelation was progressive. God was revealing Himself to man. He was also revealing man to himself; and He was, further, revealing His purposes towards man in Christ. These revelations were made across many centuries, and in a limitless variety of ways. This was the period of the world's tutelage, when men were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world; but the time appointed by the Father came, when they might enter into the position and privilege of sons.

Great, indeed, have been the **privileges** of

Israel, great also were their **responsibilities**. This people was chosen of God, on the ground of promise, to be His channel of blessing to the whole world; and if at the First Advent of Christ that purpose was not realised, it was because they made it impossible. But let us not imagine that on this account the purposes of God have failed, nor yet that He has finished with the Jews. The preservation of the Jews is as marvellous a fact as the preservation of the Bible; and that persistence can only be accounted for as Scripture accounts for it, namely, that in the future, as in the past, God has a great world-purpose to accomplish through the instrumentality of this "peeled and scattered people."

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JEWS

Jewish history is Past, Present, and Prospective; and although it is not possible to express with perfect accuracy the periods covered by these respectively, yet, for practical purposes, we may call the Past, the Mosaic Age of Jewish history; the Present, we may call the Middle or Christian Age; and the Future, the Millennial Age. In the previous chapter we had under consideration the **Past Privileges** of the Jews. Now, let us examine their **Present Position**.

We shall view that position, Nationally, Individually, and Spiritually. "In the study of the Jewish question it is most important to distinguish between that which is national and temporal, on the one hand, and that which is individual and spiritual, on

the other. Failing to observe this distinction, numbers of Christians have supposed that the spiritual interests of the individual Jew have been unfavourably affected by the national fall; and that during the period of national rejection there is little hope of even individual conversion" (Wilkinson). Let us then examine the facts.

(1) THE JEWS VIEWED NATIONALLY.—

The word which summarises this view is—**Rejection**.

(i.) **Their Position Described.**—There are several facts in regard to the present position of the Jews, so evident as to need no demonstration. Of these, we mention only three.

(a) They are **denationalised**. There is, to-day, no Jewish nation in any political sense; and the tribes which once formed the nation are scattered throughout the whole world. The Jews have no king, prince, or leader at the present time. (b) They are **dispossessed**. The land is not the Jew's to-day, although the rule of the Turk is at an end, but is under British protection. True, Jewish colonies are springing up in many parts of the land, and Jews are returning

in thousands. That is because prophecy is in process of fulfilment; but the land is not theirs; they are dispossessed as well as denationalised. And, further, (c) they are **discredited**. The Jews were once the religious leaders of mankind, and were sent forth by God upon a mission more glorious than that of any of the proud empires of old. But to-day they have no mission, they are set aside, and the Divine purpose is being accomplished along other lines.

(ii) **Their Position Predicted.**—The position above described was long ago predicted. Israel's history was written centuries before it was made; and each of the above particulars concerning them was clearly foretold. It was predicted that they were to be (a) **without a leader**. There is a marvellous passage in Hosea iii. 4, which says that "Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim." There are six things which, for a long period, they were to be "without." The first two refer to the King; the second two, to the Priest; and the last

two, to the Prophet ; and in each of the three clauses it is declared that they would be without both the **true** and the **false** of these things ; for example, “ without ephod (true), or teraphim (false).” This is exactly Israel’s case to-day ; for they have not king, priest, or prophet ; the three great offices which upheld the Jewish Constitution have all disappeared, and the Constitution has disappeared with them.¹

It was predicted that they were to be **(b) without a possession**, for we read, “ Lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve ” ; and, “ They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ” (Amos ix. 9 ; Luke xxi. 24). Scores of similar passages might be quoted foretelling the world-wide scattering of the Jews, which to-day is an accomplished thing ; for wherever one

¹ A most luminous chapter on this subject appears in *The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew*, by Rev. David Baron.

may be pleased to go, there he will find a Jew.

It was predicted, also, that they were to be **(c) without a mission.** Our Lord, their Messiah, said : "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"; and when our Lord in judgment gave up the City, the Temple, and the Nation, He deprived them, for the time-being, of the honour which He had bestowed upon them, to be His instrument of universal blessing. But that which has been described and predicted, must be explained.

(iii.) **Their Position Explained.**—How is it that the Jews are as they are to-day? What causes have combined to make them the most despised of peoples, and one of the most persecuted? It is, in a word, failure on their part to fulfil function; failure to rise to the grandeur of their privileges and the greatness of their calling. We find evidence of this failure in, at least, three directions—

(a) **Their Jewish exclusiveness.**—Jehovah was their Covenant God, and to them were

committed the holy oracles, but not for selfish possession. They were God's chosen centre of blessing, of which the world was to be the circumference. But the Jews assumed exclusive rights in God, and exclusive benefits of the Covenant. The type is Jonah, who represents Israel, in his relation to Nineveh, which represents the Gentile world. Why was Jonah unwilling to go to Nineveh? He himself tells us (ch. iv. 2).

The parallel between this individual and the nation, and this city and the world, may be extended. The nation is being chastised, as was Jonah, for not fulfilling its mission; and after the chastisement Israel is to be the vehicle of blessing to all the world, as Jonah was, ultimately, to Nineveh. But, for their religious exclusiveness, they are, for the time-being, set aside.

(b) Their departure from the Law.—If one thing is plainer than another in the Old Testament, it is that if the Chosen People did not obey the revealed will of God, they would suffer; and the sin against which they were especially warned was idolatry. Read Deut. xxix. 24-28; Lev. xxvi. 1, 30-33; Ps.

lxxviii. 55-61, and scores of parallel passages, and it will be evident why the whole nation was taken into captivity, from which the larger part never returned; and those who did return though cured of idolatry, still departed from the law, by adhering to the letter of it while disregarding the spirit; and by placing their traditions on a level with, or above, the Word of God. For this they have been set aside.

(c) **Their rejection of the Christ.**—Because they knew not the time of their visitation, and saw not in the lowly Nazarene the Messiah predicted in their Scriptures, they handed Him over to the Romans to be crucified. This was a national act and their crowning sin, and their terrible prayer has been answered: “His blood be on us, and on our children.” This, then, is their present position viewed nationally. Consider now—

(2) THE JEWS VIEWED INDIVIDUALLY.—

The word which summarises this view is—**Evangelization**; and here I would ask attention, briefly, to three things—

(i.) **The Gospel and the Jews.**—The Gospel of God's grace is for all mankind, without regard for tribal, social, or national distinctions; therefore it is for the Jews equally with the Gentiles. "God so loved the **world** that He gave" His Son. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to **every creature.**" According to the way in which this command is fulfilled by some, we must assume that the Jew is not a creature! "**Whosoever believeth shall not perish,**" can by no process of reasoning be made to exclude the Jew. In this dispensation of God's grace, the Church's commission is to evangelize the world; so that if the Jews are in the world, they must be evangelized in the same way, and on the same terms, as all other peoples.

(ii.) **The Apostles and the Jews.**—The first ingathering of those who formed the Church, on the Day of Pentecost, was, so far as we can tell, wholly from among the Jews; the first promulgation of the message was by Jews; and the travelling Apostles throughout that whole generation, upon visiting a town or city, always went first of all to the

Jewish community there, if there was one. Further, Paul definitely enjoined that the Gospel be preached to the Jews **first of all**, and this was done up to the time of the nation's overthrow in 70 A.D.; after which date, in my belief, that requirement ceased to apply.

(iii.) **The Church and the Jews.**—This leads me to say that throughout the present Christian Age, though the Jews have no prior claim upon the Church to the Gospel, yet unquestionably they have an equal claim with the Gentiles; and wherever that claim has been acknowledged, it has been rewarded in the results. Work among Jews is one of the most fruitful fields of labour, as the reports from most Jewish missions testify.

There yet remains for our consideration—

(3) THE JEWS VIEWED SPIRITUALLY.—

The word which summarises this view is—**Election**. Scripture reveals several things of the greatest importance concerning the spiritual condition of the Jews in this Age.

(i.) **There is a remnant according to the election of Grace** (Rom. xi. 5).—We must distinguish carefully between three Elections—**(a)** the Elect Nation (Isa. lxxv. 9, 22), which is all Israel; **(b)** The Elect Remnant (Joel ii. 32), very frequently referred to throughout the Old Testament, and by which is meant the Jews who are saved during the Tribulation, the faithful in the hour of Jacob's trouble; **(c)** The Election of Grace (Rom. xi. 5), which is composed of those Jews who, during this dispensation, receive Christ Jesus as their Saviour. This truth is most important in the context in which it occurs (Rom. chs. ix-xi.).

(ii.) **This remnant is part of Abram's spiritual seed.**—Abram is the father of three seeds—**(a)** the **natural** seed—that is, Ishmael and his posterity; **(b)** the **covenant** seed, that is, Isaac and his posterity; and **(c)** the **spiritual** seed, that is, all the children of faith. Failure to distinguish between these, and the promises made to them respectively, has led to endless confusion of interpretation. The Jews are in every age Abram's covenant seed; but those who, in this dispensation,

accept Christ as Saviour, become part of his spiritual seed also, for, "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abram" (Gal. iii. 6, 7). All believing Gentiles, also, are of his spiritual seed; and these together, as we shall now see, constitutes the One Body of Christ.

(iii) **This elect Remnant, or spiritual seed, are included in the one Body.**—By the Cross of Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles have been made "one new man"; also, "fellow-heirs, fellow-members, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel"; so that all spiritual blessings in Christ open to Gentiles in this Age, are also open to the Jews as **individuals**; but there can be no **national** conversion in this Age.

We have frequently heard of Christ's "Gentile Bride," and the case of Boaz and Ruth has been cited as a type; but the simple fact is, Christ has no Gentile Bride. If the Church be the Bride, then she is composed of Jews and Gentiles, who, on equal terms, have been admitted to equal privileges; for, in

Christ is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, bond nor free.

From this rapid review of a big subject, it will be seen how immensely important it is to understand the difference between the past and the present positions of the Jews, as confusion here must result in the misinterpretation of the major part of the Scriptures.

The First Advent of Christ marked a crisis in the history of the Jewish nation. With His Coming, had they accepted Him, their life-long hopes would have been fulfilled, and the Davidic kingdom established on earth. But as they rejected Him, the realisation of those hopes was indefinitely postponed, and the kingdom purpose suspended; and during this Age, which is parenthetical, God is working along other lines.

The importance of this subject cannot be overrated, especially as this Age draws towards a close; for, in spite of the very explicit declarations of Scripture concerning the future of the Jews, the prevailing view, where any view at all is held, is that the

Elect Nation has served its purpose in having given us the Bible and Christ; and that wherein it failed to fully realise the Covenant promises, it has, through unbelief, for ever missed its opportunity, and must sooner or later perish, as other ancient peoples have perished. In this view the Covenant promises of the Old Testament are being fulfilled in a spiritual sense to the Church. But such an interpretation of the Scriptures is impossible if words have any significance at all; and those who hold it, if they have any philosophy of history, must have one which is entirely opposed to that revealed in the Bible. No one who neglects the Jews can understand the plan of God in history, either that part of it which is realised, or that which is to be.

It is to be feared that the sad neglect of the prophetic Scriptures, on the part of very many, is directly due to a disbelief of their supernatural character, and an unwillingness to recognise that in the Bible is revealed a Divine Plan of the Ages. Yet, assuredly, there is such a Plan, with the Redeemer as its key idea and fact.

CHAPTER III

THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE JEWS

Having reviewed the Past Privileges and Present Position of the Jews, we now come to the consideration of their **Future Prospects.**

A careful study of Rom. xi., and related Scriptures, will greatly enlighten us on this subject. The first point which claims our attention concerns—

(1) THEIR TEMPORARY REJECTION.

In reading Rom. chs. ix-xi., two things should be carefully observed: first, that the rejection of Israel, here set forth, is not **total**, for, “there is a remnant according to the election of grace”; and second, that it is not **final**, for we read: “All Israel shall be

saved.” That their rejection should be only temporary is declared by all the Prophets and the Covenants.

(i.) **The Abrahamic Covenant requires it.**

—God promised to Abram and his seed an inheritance, the boundaries of which are indicated in several passages, e.g.: Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17; xv. 18-21; Ezek. xlvii. 13-xlviii. 1. Now any careful student of Israel’s history must see that the people, even in the time of David, never possessed all that had by Covenant been given to them; and the question is: Has the purpose failed, or, is the promise yet to be fulfilled? About the answer there can be no doubt. Then, the Abrahamic Covenant declares that Abram’s posterity should be the channel of blessing to all the nations of the earth. It is believed, generally, that this promise has been fulfilled, in that, through Israel, we have received the Bible, and Christ. But that fact by no means exhausts the promise; for the Covenant leads us to believe that at the time of this world-wide blessing, Israel itself would be a united and consecrated people, which, of course, is not true of them at the

present time. If, then, these promises are to be fulfilled, the rejection of Israel can only be temporary.

(ii.) **The Mosaic Covenant requires it.**—In the plains of Moab, it was clearly declared, in that great prophetic discourse of Moses, that the rejection of Israel, consequent upon their sin, would not be permanent. “The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee” (Deut. xxx. 1-10). This prophecy has certainly not been fulfilled as yet; and, either it shall be, or the Divine purpose has failed.

(iii.) **The Davidic Covenant requires it.**—Jehovah’s covenant with David promised on oath that “his seed shall establish his kingdom **for ever**”; and that the Divine “mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee,” but “thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: **thy throne shall be established for ever.**” This promise was renewed to Mary by the angel

Gabriel, who said concerning the Messiah: "The Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." It will not do to say that this is a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men; for, in that case, what has it to do with either David or Jacob? Unquestionably the kingdom referred to is earthly, visible, and historical; and that it is not yet established, implies that the rejection of Israel, in whom the kingdom was founded, is only temporary.

Here, then, are three great Covenants, the Abrahamic, or **Racial**; the Mosaic, or **Religious**; and the Davidic, or **Regal**; and they all bear witness to a destiny for Israel to which this people has not yet come; and in perfect harmony with this is the teaching of our Lord, of Paul, and of the Apocalypse. Following necessarily from Israel's temporary rejection, is—

(2) THEIR PERMANENT RESTORATION.—

These are but the two sides of one truth. There will be a restoration ideally to all the

Divine purposes revealed in the Covenants; and these may be summarized as follows:—

(i.) **Israel shall be restored to Divine favour.**—The age-long controversy which Jehovah has had with His people shall end, and the black cloud which for so long has hid His face from them, shall be blotted out. About this, the Scriptures are very clear. “From all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” “I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in Mine anger; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.” Repentant Israel shall acknowledge and receive the Messiah, and be again reinstated in the favour of the Lord.

(ii.) **Israel shall be re-united among themselves.**—It is impossible for us to be right with God and wrong with men; and so disrupted Israel, restored to God, shall also

be reunited as a nation. For nearly three thousand years they have been sadly divided ; but “ in that day ” schism shall give place to unity. This is predicted in many Scriptures, but we may here recall, especially, the symbol of the sticks. Ezekiel was to take two sticks ; to write on the one, “ For Judah,” and on the other, “ For Joseph,” and to “ join them one to another into one stick.” Then follows the interpretation: “ Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in Mine hand.” Has that prophecy ever been fulfilled? Have the divided tribes of Israel ever become one nation again, since the days of Rehoboam? Of course they have not ; but they are to become such, in the future, and, many of us believe, in the near future. “ Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.” But further—

(iii.) **Israel shall be re-adjusted with the nations.**—I have already referred to the prevailing view, that the Old Testament

promises with reference to this are now being fulfilled by Christianity; but such a view as that does violence to every canon of sound interpretation, and throws out of perspective the whole historic plan revealed in the Bible. So long as the kingdom of the Old Testament and the Church of the New Testament are run into one another, and their distinctive periods and purposes ignored or denied, anything like intelligent and harmonious exegesis is impossible. The universal blessing through Israel, promised in the Covenant with Abram, is to be bestowed in a theocratic dispensation, which, of course, the present dispensation is not. In that day "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, . . . and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for **out of Zion** shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord **from Jerusalem**. And He shall judge between many peoples, and shall reprove strong nations afar off; and they shall beat

their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Is the fulfilment of this passage, past, present, future, or at all? If it has any fulfilment, it must be literally as it stands; and as such a thing has never yet come to pass, the passage still awaits fulfilment. But before the Restoration, Reunion, and Readjustment take place, of which we have spoken, the Jews, in unbelief, will have returned to Palestine—a circumstance required in order to the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the end; and a circumstance which we see in process of accomplishment at the present time. Finally, we turn attention to—

(3) **THEIR MESSIAH-REDEEMER.**—It is natural to ask: What is it that marks the end of Israel's rejection, and the inauguration of their establishment for ever? And the answer which is given by all the prophets is—The Return of Christ. So consider—

(i.) **The Time of Messiah's Advent.**—This is defined in a variety of ways, and is dependent on a variety of circumstances. For

instance, it will be (a) at the end of The Great Tribulation; (b) when "the Times of the Gentiles" are fulfilled; (c) shortly before the opening of the Millennial Age. If there is one thing plainer than another in the prophetic Scriptures, it is that the Millennial Age of peace and blessing is preceded by Divine judgments upon the prevailing wickedness. These two facts, and always in that order, are oft repeated, especially in the Old Testament. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His lions, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."

(ii.) **The Manner of Messiah's Advent.**—This is plainly declared in Acts i. 11: "This Jesus, Who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." These words declare that Messiah's advent will be personal, visible, through the heavens, and, to the earth. No room is left for question or doubt. Lest it be suggested that another person is referred to, it says, "This same Jesus." Lest it be denied that He really left the earth, it says, Who "is taken up from

you into heaven.” Lest it be imagined that the Coming predicted was to be progressive, it says, He shall come as He went; and He went suddenly. And lest it be concluded that His return would be spiritual and invisible, it says, “He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go.” How did He go? Bodily and visibly. Then, that is how He will come. No declaration could be more emphatic or explicit. It should be understood that this verse does not refer to His coming to the air for His saints, but to the earth with them.

(iii.) **The Purpose of Messiah’s Advent.**
—Comprehensively, it is to fulfil the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, to realise the Theocratic Ideal—(a) by visiting all His enemies with judgment, (b) by resuming His dealings with the elect nation, and (c) by establishing His kingdom on the earth. This, then, is the goal of Jewish history—the establishment of a kingdom which shall have no end, and of which Israel, ruled over by Messiah, shall be the religious and political centre. “His people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for

ever.” “I will plant them upon their land ; for they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

Taking, now, a comprehensive view of Jewish history—(1) their Past Privileges, (2) their Present Position, and, (3) their Future Prospects—we are enabled to see that the great foci around which their entire history revolves, are the First and Second Advents of the Messiah. Neglect or denial of any part of this truth can only serve to obscure the purposes of God, and prevent us from intelligently co-operating with Him unto their accomplishment.

Surely these days of national upheaval and world-unrest must compel the most indifferent to give heed to the things that are written concerning the coming again of the Lord Jesus. The predicted indications of the end of this Age unquestionably characterise our time ; and everything is pointing to the speedy Advent of Christ for His Church, and resumption of His dealings with Israel. Among these many “ signs,” let me just name

five. (1) **The Craze for Pleasure** (2 Tim. iii. 1-4). This craze expresses itself in a limitless variety of ways, according to the make-up and means of the individual, so that it is unnecessary to single out any one form of it. (2) **The Rise of Democracy** (Dan. ii.). No one will question that this is **the** democratic age in the world's history; and that the voice of the man in the street is more feared, often, than the voice of the king. The clay is lavishly intermingled with the iron in our time. (3) **The Apostasy of Christendom.** The professing Church is sodden with infidelity—imported, largely, from that land which has preferred Nietzsche to Paul, and has listened to Treitschke rather than to Christ. Is there a doctrine of the New Testament which has been left unchallenged, or undenied? (4) **The Upheaval of Nations** (Matt. xxiv. 6-8). Truly, these are days of national unrest and upheaval; days in which, we believe, prophecy is in rapid process of fulfilment, so far as the disposition of the nations is concerned; and the course of a few years must witness momentous changes. (5) **The Jews and the East.** When we think of the

Zionist Movement, of the Jewish Colonies in Palestine, of the thousands of Jews in Jerusalem, of the overthrow of Turkey's power in the land, of the significant activities in Mesopotamia and Chaldea, of the fig-tree beginning again to send forth its shoots—surely it must be obvious that summer is nigh! Well for us is it, if, like the children of Issachar, we have “understanding of the times,” that we may know what we ought to do.

PART B



**THE GENTILES
IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY**

God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the LORD, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by the Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.

PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

THE AGE OF GENTILE REJECTION

Having considered the history of the Jews, we propose now to review the past, present, and future of the Gentiles, as set forth in Scripture, historically, and prophetically. Our subject will be divided into three main parts, namely: (1) The Age of Gentile Rejection: from Abram to Nebuchadnezzar. (2) The Age of Gentile Dominion: from Nebuchadnezzar to Christ's Second Advent. (3) The Age of Gentile Conversion: the Period of the Millennium.

THE AGE OF GENTILE REJECTION —From Abram to Nebuchadnezzar.

Up to the time of the dispersion which followed the rebellion at Babel, the race was one, neither Jew nor Gentile, although there had already been exhibited a principle of selection in the line of Seth and Shem. But

from the time of the great scattering, God's dispensational method finds expression in the separation of the Hebrew people from all other peoples, and these are thereafter distinguished as the Israelites (or Hebrews) on the one hand, and the Gentiles on the other. Election, as a principle, implies rejection, and during the long period from Abram to Nebuchadnezzar, over thirteen hundred years, the Hebrews were the elected, and the Gentiles were the rejected.

But we should clearly understand what is meant by **rejected**. By that expression we do not mean that the Gentiles, during this period, were out of God's sight; or, that He had no dealings with individuals among them; or, that they were not playing a great part in the unfolding of the Divine plan: but that during this period they did not constitute the main line along which He was pleased to carry forward His gracious purposes. Looking more carefully at this important fact, consider—

(1) THE GENTILES AND JEHOVAH.

What was the attitude of Jehovah to the nations throughout this period, and indeed

up to the overthrow of Jerusalem, in 70 A.D.? We find a marvellously luminous utterance in St. Paul's discourse to the Athenians (Acts xvii. 26-30), which reads: "He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance, therefore, God overlooked." From this at least three great truths emerge—

(a) That God directed the history of the peoples of old.— "Having determined their appointed seasons," *i.e.*, the period at which each race should be called to play its part in the drama of the world's history; and, "having determined the bounds of their habitation," *i.e.*, the circumstances of coun-

try, soil, and climate, which should give shape and colour to their life and character. Thus God appointed of old the historical and geographical scope and limits of the Gentile peoples—the Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Grecians, Romans, and the many smaller powers ; and there is no reason to believe that God is doing otherwise to-day with Britain, Russia, France, Germany, America, and the Eastern Empires, for He is still immanent and sovereign.

(b) That God was not far removed from the souls of the peoples of old.—“ He is not far from each one of us.” God was made manifest to the Gentiles in **nature** without, and in their **conscience** within ; and though they were, for the most part, without revealed religion, God was directing them to seek after Him in Whom was the power of their every act, sensation, and thought. This truth, we know, was more or less vaguely apprehended by the heathen, as, for instance, by Aratus of Tarsus (270 B.C.), and Cleanthes of Assos (300 B.C.), who are here quoted.

(c) That God overlooked the sins of the peoples of old.—"The times of their ignorance God overlooked." These ancient peoples were wholly given to idolatry, as a study of their histories abundantly shows. But they were in the darkness of ignorance, for the light which had come to Israel had never been given to them; though God did at times manifest Himself in a special way to individuals such as Melchizedek, Abimelech, Job, Pharaoh, Rahab, Cyrus, and perhaps, though less directly, to such as Socrates. During this long period God withheld from the nations the punishment which enlightenment would have rendered necessary: He "overlooked," or, as Paul says, there was "prætermision of their sins." The Gentiles were by no means guiltless; for, as we have said, they had the light of nature and of conscience, by which they stood condemned (Rom. i. 20). But in the absence of Divine revelation, Divine justice slumbered; and God overlooked their evil until Christ should come and command "all men everywhere to repent." This, then, was the relation of Jehovah to the Gentile nations during the time that Israel

was working out its Divine calling under the Covenants. Consider further—

(2) THE GENTILES AND THE COVENANT.

Perhaps the most important passage on this point is Eph. ii. 12: "At that time ye were separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." From this we learn several solemn and important truths. The Gentiles were separated from the Israelitish commonwealth when God called that people in Abram. In consequence of this, they were exempt from participation in the great promise of Messiah, so often repeated to Israel, and thus, were without God, and without hope. "The deep truth of this is fully attested by classical and other heathen literature, ancient and modern. Aspiration and conjecture there often were, but **no hope**, in the Scripture sense; no expectation on a firm basis. A profound uncertainty about the unseen

and eternal underlies many of the strongest expressions of the classical poets and philosophers. And in the special reference of 'hope' here, hope of a Redeemer and a redeemed inheritance, there was (and is) a total blank, apart from revelation" (Moule). Thus it is that the Gentile peoples of old are brought to notice in the Old Testament, only as they came into touch with Israel—the instrument of Jehovah for the fulfilment of His purposes during that age. But consider this thought more closely in—

(3) THE GENTILES AND ISRAEL.

A most remarkable passage on this point will be found in Deut. xxxii. 8: "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." From this verse we learn more of the ways of God with the nations of old than all the histories of the ancients tell us. Among the truths here revealed we may mention—

(a) That when God portioned out the inheritance of each nation (Acts xvii. 26), He reserved for Israel, as the People of His choice, an inheritance proportioned to its number.—At the dispersion which took place after the Divine visitation at Babel, Jehovah reserved for Israel the land of Canaan, which He afterwards promised to Abram, and gave to his posterity. “ Abraham and Canaan, the Hebrew Nation and the Land of Promise, the long on-going and out-working of the Mosaic economy, in conjunction with the physical phenomena of their earthly inheritance—by and through these did the Spirit of Inspiration evolve and perfect man’s religious language. Palestine, fashioned and furnished by the Creator’s hand, was the arena, and the people of Israel were the actors brought upon it, and made to perform their parts by the Divine Master.” The Lord had (and has) a select **place**, as well as a select **people**; and we have thought and said too little of the fact that Palestine was, and is again to be, God’s geographical centre of operations. But in this passage it is declared, and history past and present

bears witness to the fact (Ezek. v. 5).
Further—

(b) God distributed the Gentile nations around Israel in such wise that they might have opportunity of seeking Jehovah by contact with His people.—A glance at a map of the old world will reveal how wonderfully those ancient peoples were disposed around Palestine. There were Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia on the East; Syria and Asia Minor on the North; the Mediterranean on the West; and the desert and Egypt on the South. It has been well said that “Judaism prepared salvation for mankind, and heathenism prepared mankind for salvation” (Kurtz).

First of all, Israel was isolated that it might be taught. The nation was hedged about geographically by the sea, mountains, and desert; and ethically by the Moral Law. Then it was scattered abroad in order to prepare the world for the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel. At the same time, the pagan peoples, who crossed and recrossed Palestine in their lust for conquest, incidentally came into touch with

revealed religion, and, at least, had the opportunity of learning of Jehovah. But finally, this passage (Deut. xxxii. 8) discloses that—

(c) The Gentile nations are brought to notice in Scripture only as they came into contact, for good or evil, with the people of God.—Just as, in the story of the Elect, everything is subordinated to the unfolding or redeeming purpose, so the great peoples who were making history during those many centuries — Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc.—are brought to notice only as God sent Israel to enlighten them, or employed them to discipline Israel. This is a most important truth, and one which explains the absence in the Old Testament of so much which we would have liked to know. Certainly this was the Age of Gentile Rejection; but throughout, among them as among the Elect, though not in the same way, a work of preparation was going on, in view of that “fulness of time” when God should send forth His Son.

It is more than probable that the nonage, or tutelage, spoken of in Gal. iv. 1-11, was that of the whole world, and not of the Jews

only. If so, we see what was God's relation to the pagan peoples of that time. "The 'rudiments' were the simplest beginnings of the spiritual education of the race; and the material world, with its various material objects, was the great lesson-book of pictures laid open by the great God before the eyes of the infant race. To the heathen God revealed Himself through the material world, and thus laid a foundation of moral obligation" (Beet). Thus: "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity; so that they are without excuse."

In geography, as in history, places as well as peoples are integral parts of the world-wide and age-long plan of God. In the tragic years of 1914-1918 Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Belgium; and Germany, Austria, Turkey, were blindly working out their destinies on fields of blood: Germany hysterically clutching at world-dominion, the Allies standing to defend the right. Since then ill-will, and universal unrest have con-

tinued. What shall the end be? Europe, East and West, is already recast in the Prophetic Scriptures, and this universal upheaval must greatly advance the formation of the Ten Kingdoms of "the time of the end"; and it is God, and not man, who shall determine both the time thereof, and the boundary lines.

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF GENTILE DOMINION

The second part of our study is as fascinating as it is important; namely, the age of Gentile dominion — **From Nebuchadnezzar to the Return of the Messiah.** It covers a period of not less than two thousand five hundred years, and concerning it there is a great amount of material in Scripture. For the sake of brevity and clearness, we shall consider the meaning of the following expressions:— The Times, the Engrafting, and the Fulness of the Gentiles.

(1) THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

This expression is used in Luke xxi. 24, and refers to the period of Gentile World-Power, which began with the ascendancy of Nebuchadnezzar, and will terminate when He comes whose right it is to reign.

Consider first:—

(a) The Beginning of these “Times.”—

Summarily, two events brought in this period of Gentile Dominion—the Fall of Judah through unbelief, and the rise of the Babylonian Empire. The record of these happenings will be found in the closing chapters of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and in the Book of Daniel. With the Chaldean Empire under Nebuchadnezzar began a new period of time, throughout the length of which the centre of the Divine operations was transferred from the elect nation to the Gentile peoples. This transference was not absolute from the first, but gradual, commencing in 606 B.C.: advancing in 586 B.C. with the dethronement of Zedekiah; becoming more clearly marked when the Jews rejected Christ in 30 A.D.; and was made absolute with the overthrow of the Nation by Titus in 70 A.D. In all this, the wonderful long-suffering of God is manifest, giving Israel abounding opportunity to repent, and fulfil age-continuously her high calling.

(b) The Course of these "Times."—

This is plainly set forth in the symbolic Image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the interpretation of which was given by Daniel. The whole Image represents the "Times of the Gentiles," during the course of which four great empires appear, represented by four metals. The head of gold represents the Babylonian Empire; the breast and arms of silver, the Medo-Persian Empire; the belly and thigh-part of brass, the Grecian Empire; and the legs and feet of iron, latterly intermingled with clay, represent the Roman Empire. These have been the only four World-Empires from Nebuchadnezzar's time until the present; thus, so far, the course of history marked out prophetically in this Image has been literally fulfilled, and, many believe, is at the present time being rapidly fulfilled. This same period of time was revealed in figure to Daniel, who saw four great beasts rise out of the Mediterranean. The first was like a Lion; the second, like a Bear; the third, like a Leopard; and the fourth is called "dreadful and terrible." These represent respectively the four Empires already named, and correspond to

the gold, silver, brass, and iron of the Colossal Man. Nebuchadnezzar's is the human view of this period, and Daniel's is the Divine; so that, what in the eyes of the world is imposing, intellectual, and powerful, is, in the eyes of God, corrupt and cruel. And it is not a little striking that the record of the one is in the Chaldean tongue, the language of the heathen; but the record of the other is in the Hebrew tongue, the language of Divine revelation.

However late the date which rationalistic criticism may assign to the Book of Daniel, these chapters still remain prophecy, and, in part, yet await fulfilment. Such a revelation as this should lead us to very serious consideration at such a time as this, for we are not left in ignorance as to whereabouts we are in this programme of time. The Chaldean, Medo-Persian, and Grecian Powers passed away before Christ came into the world. At His advent, Rome was in power, and remained so until the time of Diocletian, 284-305 A.D., when it was first divided. After a chequered history, the Empire was finally divided into East and

West in 395 A.D. ; and the Western part was broken up into a number of petty kingdoms after the disposition of Romulus in 476 A.D. These two great divisions of the Empire would seem to be prefigured by the two iron legs of the Image. Below the ankles of this "man" we see the iron of autocracy intermingled with the clay of democracy, making the feet "brittle," and the whole Image insecure. Students of prophecy, and of the signs of the times, recognise that this is the time of the Gentile period at which we have already arrived ; and that, chiefly since the French Revolution, the "clay" has become more and more prominent, until, in our time, there is hardly a throne in Europe secure.

But we are told that in the last phase of this period, within the area considered, are to be Ten Kingdoms, five east and five west, corresponding to the ten toes of the Image, and the ten horns of the Beast ; and it is when they are formulated that the "Stone" shall fall which shall bring down the whole Image, that is, bring to an end the "Times of the Gentiles." Are we perfectly

sure that those Ten Kingdoms are not now in process of formation? If they be, then the sands of the Gentile glass are fast running out, and the end of this age is at hand. A quarter of a century from now, as things are moving, would probably suffice for the fulfilment of all that must take place ere Christ returns to the earth in glory. This brings us to the consideration of—

(c) **The End of these “Times.”**—“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces.” This Stone, we know, is Christ, who will come forth at the close of this age to smite the Gentile World-Powers with sudden destruction, and resume His dealings with Israel as a nation (Isa. lxiii. 1-6; Dan. xi. 35; Zech. xii. 1-9, etc.). In the light of these, and many other scriptures, how significant are the happenings of to-day! Let us now examine the expression—

(2) THE ENGRAFTING OF THE GENTILES.

Read Rom. xi. 11-32; and especially verses 17, 19, 24. The understanding of this sec-

tion of the Roman letter is of vital moment to a right appreciation of the ways of God. The three points of importance here are the olive tree, the branches cut off and the branches grafted in.

(a) The Olive Tree.—What, we must first ask, is to be understood by this Olive Tree? Some have said it is Christ Jesus the Lord. But this surely cannot be; as neither Jews nor Gentiles could be put into, and taken out of Christ, in the fashion here indicated. Moreover, such an idea is irreconcilable with that magnificent declaration of chapter viii., that nothing can separate the saved from the love of God in Christ. Others make the Olive Tree to be the Church of God; a view wholly untenable on several grounds, but chiefly on this, that Israel, as such, never was, and never is to be, any part of the Body of Christ. The latter does not come distinctly into view in this chapter (xi.), which is occupied with Israel and the Gentiles, respectively, as such. No doubt there are branches now in the Olive Tree, since Pentecost, which are also members of Christ's Body, the Assembly of God;

but the Tree itself presents another idea altogether, and embraces the dealings of God on the ground of covenant promise made to Abraham. We, therefore, regard the Olive in this place to be the **Tree of covenant promise of privilege and blessing on earth.** This is supported by the consideration that, not only is the Olive a characteristic product of Palestine, but it is also symbolical of a plant of grace (cf. Ps. lii. 8; Hos. xiv. 6; Jer. xi. 16, etc.).

“It is of the greatest moment to avoid confounding the continuous line of the inheritance of the promise on earth, the Olive Tree, with the Mystery of Christ and the Church, where all is new and above nature. There is no breaking off members from the Body, nor is the Jew a natural limb any more than the Gentile. All is heavenly grace, and entirely distinct from the system of administered promises which began with Abraham the first fruit. No doubt those who compose the Church, Christ’s Body, come in as branches, standing through faith in the room of the broken-off Jewish ones; but others do, also, who are mere professors

of Christ, and do not appreciate God's goodness, but forsake it for forms, or scepticism, or open evil, and will thus fall under His just severity when the moment arrives to cut off the faithless Gentile graft, as before, the unbelieving natural boughs of Israel. It is no question of saving grace here, but of earthly responsibility according to the respective testimony, first of Israel, next of Christendom " (Kelly).

(b) The Branches Cut off.—There can be no doubt with regard to whom these represent. They are the Israelites, the elect people of God, who are the "natural branches" of the Olive Tree, to whom first belonged the true Theocratic stem, and all the covenant promises.

(c) The Branches Grafted in.—We have already seen that upon a right understanding of this point everything depends. The common view is, that these are **Gentile Christians**, grafted into the Church of God. But if the Tree is not the Church of God, that view collapses; and if it were the Church, the grafting in, and ultimate "cutting off" could only mean that persons

saved on the ground of sovereign grace may be finally lost through unfaithfulness to Christ—a doctrine which Scripture, rightly interpreted, does not teach. Read again Rom. viii. 35-39. These grafted-in branches must therefore, be **Gentiles**, as such. We have seen that Israel have been set aside for the time being. Who have taken their place? Not the Church of God as such, though we participate in the blessings of the dispensation; but Gentile Christendom now occupies the place of privilege and responsibility once held by Israel, and on the same terms, so that, if they are faithless, they too shall be “cut off.” This dispensation continues to the coming again of Christ in glory, and so extends beyond the period of the Church on earth. To grasp this idea, will bring a great deal of Scripture into its proper perspective. But there is yet another expression we must consider—

(3) THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES.

Rom. xi. 25. This “fulness” must not be confused with either the engrafting of the

Gentiles or the promised future universal Gentile blessing to be mediated through Israel. The expression means **the complete number** of the Gentiles, and refers to a certain number from among the mass. It is not Scriptural to speak of a Gentile Church, because the Church is neither Jew nor Gentile, but is composed of both. But, we believe, it is the Gentiles who become members of Christ's Body, who are pointed to by this expression, "the fulness of the Gentiles." A most important passage on this point is Acts xv. 13—18, where James and Peter apprehend that God was taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name; and James, in his speech, quotes from Amos ix. 11, 12, "**After this I** will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down." "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Some regard the expression as referring to the Times of the Gentiles, and that view should not hastily be set aside; but, on the whole, I lean to the other interpretation.

Looking again at this entire period of Gentile Dominion, we cannot but be greatly

impressed with the wisdom and grace of God herein displayed. There are dispensations within dispensations ; and if we would rightly apprehend the smaller, we must, in some measure, understand the wider aspects of God's governmental dealings with mankind. Such a vision of His ways brings a great peace into the heart, and a great patience also ; for we shall realise that we must give God time, as well as room, in which to work out such designs, and not expect to see, in our short day, the completion of these great purposes. Such a vision will make us feel our smallness in comparison with the whole ; but we should also realise how very important every one of us is, in that it is given to us, in our measure, to advance these Divine designs, and so bring a little nearer the consummation of all the ages.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF GENTILE CONVERSION

We now come to a consideration of the third great period of Gentile story, **THE AGE OF GENTILE CONVERSION**. It is important to observe that the three Gentile ages, Rejection, Dominion, and Conversion, overlap one another, as do all the dispensations. The Gentile Dominion began before the Gentile Rejection finished; and the Gentile Conversion will begin before the Gentile Dominion finishes. Because of this, the things that claim our attention here, are—The Great Tribulation, The Second Advent, and the Millennial Age.

(1) **THE GREAT TRIBULATION.**—Consider first of all—

(a) **The Time of the Great Tribulation.** The passage we select for this consideration is Dan. ix. 24-27; a key-passage to the

prophetic Scriptures. There we read of Seventy Sevens of prophetic years (cf. Lev. xxv. 8) that is, four hundred and ninety years, which are to run their course. It is a **Jewish period**, for it is determined upon Daniel's "people," and their "holy city." The angel plainly declared when this period was to commence, and how it was to end. Some think it has already ended, but we can easily test that view. We are told that this period, when complete, would usher in a certain order of things, which is described as follows:—(a) To finish transgression; (b) to make an end of sins; (c) to make reconciliation for iniquity; (d) to bring in everlasting righteousness; (e) to seal up vision and prophecy; and (f) to anoint the most holy. If, therefore, this period is ended, these things must have been accomplished. But have they? Let this sin-cursed world to-day reply.

Then, if the prophecy has not been fulfilled, it remains to be; so let us examine the passage more closely. We find that these Seventy Sevens are divided into three unequal parts—seven, sixty-two, and one;

and that they began "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem," in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 445 B.C. (Neh. ii. 6). We learn, further, the time at which sixty-nine of these Seventy Sevens would run out: "**From . . . unto** the Anointed One, the Prince, shall be seven sevens, and threescore and two sevens. And after the threescore and two sevens shall the Anointed One be cut off, and shall have nothing." There can be no doubt, I assume, that this Anointed One is the Lord Jesus, and that the "cutting off" refers to Israel's rejection of Him, leaving Him without His kingdom. Now, the question is, did the seventieth seven follow right on upon the sixty-ninth? If it did, then, seven years after the Crucifixion, the sixfold purpose above enumerated must have been accomplished. But was it? Read Acts viii. to xii. for reply; and think also of the terrible Jewish overthrow in 70 A.D.

Evidently, then, the seventieth seven is detached from the sixty-nine, and lies still in the future. The last seven years, we are

told, is divided "in the midst," and its two parts are variously spoken of as (a) a time and times, and half a time—Dan. xii. 7 ; Rev. xii. 14 (b) Forty and two months—Rev. xi. 2 ; xiii. 5 ; (c) A thousand two hundred and threescore days—Rev. xi. 3 ; xii. 6. Each reckoning, you will observe, amounts to a period of three and a half prophetic years of three hundred and sixty days per year. It is the latter half of this seven years that is called the Great Tribulation, and not the whole period, as is often supposed. The **time** being thus fixed, let us now consider—

(b) The Character of the Great Tribulation.—It is called, in addition to the above name (Rev. vii. 14, R.V.), "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7) : "the time of trouble" (Dan. xii. 1) ; and "the hour of trial" (Rev. iii. 10) ; and the greater part of the Book of Revelation is devoted to a description of the period, as are also large parts of the Prophecies, and many Psalms. The subjects of this time of trouble are Jews chiefly, and also Gentiles ; but not the Church of God, which is removed before it commences (Rev. iii. 10). Gabriel tells us

that a prince, yet to come, shall make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, and that after three and a half years have passed, he will break his covenant, and reveal his true character. Such a procedure is not wholly unknown in modern history. This prince will then make blasphemous claims for himself, and enforce them by every expedient of cruelty; and although Jerusalem shall be the vortex of the great persecution that shall follow, its desolating current shall be felt the world over. This much has been said about this "hour of trial," only to lead up to the subject in hand.

(c) The Gentiles and the Great Tribulation.—What part do they play at this time, and how are they affected by the descent of the devil into the earth? (Rev. xii. 9). In Scripture they would seem to be classified in a threefold way—

(i.) The Gentiles who are saved during this period (Rev. vii. 9-17; see ver. 14, R.V.). In the former part of Rev. vii. we read of a large company of Jews who are sealed for God, and who, it would seem, are preachers

of "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (Matt. xxiv. 14); and immediately following, we read of "a great multitude . . . of all nations kindreds, peoples, and tongues, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They are seen as beyond the Tribulation, having come through it; and no doubt their conversion is due, instrumentally, to the witness of the Jewish elect. This Gentile conversion must not be confused with the conversion of Gentiles throughout the world during this Christian age.

(ii.) Next we see the nations which befriend the Jews during this period (Matt. xxv. 35-40). In this passage, much misinterpreted, there are several particulars which distinguish the judgment herein described from all others. The Judge is "the Son of Man" and the Messiah-King; it is when He "comes in His glory"; it is with reference to His "brethren," the Jews; and, it is "all nations" that are gathered before Him. Other scriptures furnish further particulars.

The criterion in this judgment is the way in which the Gentile nations have treated the

sealed and evangelising Jewish Remnant during the Tribulation. Those that befriend them are said to have fed, clothed, visited, and protected them; and in doing so, more or less consciously manifested their attitude towards Christ.

(iii.) But there are also the nations which persecute the Jews during this period. These are described as "goats," and are placed on the left hand of the Judge. Their sentence is terrible and final, because their hatred of Christ was expressed in their treatment of His people. This judgment was forecast in the Abrahamic Covenant, where we read: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." Unquestionably, in these words, the nations' treatment of the elect people is made a ground of judgment; and it is that judgment which is described in Matt. xxv.

Looking at these three classes of Gentiles together, we may distinguish them in this way: in the first, a multitude of individual Gentiles is saved through acceptance of the Gospel preached; in the second, the salvation is national, and does not necessarily carry

with it eternal individual salvation, for, it would appear, it is of this class of Gentiles that they are who, in the Millennium, yield only "feigned obedience" to the King (Ps. lxvi. 3, mar. ; lxxxi. 15), and are engaged in battle against Him at its close (Rev. xx. 7-9); in the third, the destruction is national, and, no doubt, those who do not assume their nation's attitude towards the Jews and Christ, shall be numbered in the first class, because of those who believe unto salvation.

We see, therefore, that during the short dispensation which intervenes between the catching up of the Church, and the opening of the Millennial Age, momentous events are to transpire in the earth, which shall have a definitely religious significance; events which we believe, are already in rapid process of development. We must now ask by what means is this period of trouble to end, and the age of universal blessing to be ushered in? The only and sufficient reply is, by—

(2) THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST.—

In dealing with this it will be necessary to touch upon several matters which have al-

ready been brought to our notice; and others, which we have held over for consideration here. Consider then, first of all—

(a) The two Stages of Christ's Advent.—

For lack of distinguishing these, many students of the subject have been greatly perplexed; but this recognised, all is clear.

(i) There is His coming for and with His saints. This is set forth clearly in several passages, but specially in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; His coming with, in vers. 13-14; and His coming for, in vers. 15-18. The first of these truths was a familiar one to the Jewish students of the Old Testament, and to Paul's Gentile converts (Zech. xiv. 5; Jude 14, 15); but the second truth had never been heard of up to this time. It was only when death (by martyrdom, probably) invaded the Thessalonian Church, and the Christians were thrown into bewilderment of mind and heart, that, in response to their perplexity, this fresh revelation was given to Paul for them. He had said: "Them that are fallen asleep through Jesus (cf. ii. 14, 15) will God bring with Him" (iii. 13, R.V. mar.). But how? Here begins the fresh

revelation. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord"; then follows the declaration that, before Christ comes with His saints, He is coming for them (iv. 15-17). This is the foundation passage of the subject, on which 1 Cor. xv. and all others rest.

(ii.) There is His Coming to the air and to the earth. When He comes to the air, it will be for His saints; but when He comes to the earth, it will be with them. These two stages of the one coming do not follow immediately, but are interrupted by the period of time referred to in the former part of this chapter; and therein lies the importance of the distinction.

(iii.) There is His Coming privately and publicly. Christ's Advent to the air, for His saints, will be private (1 Thess. iv.; 1 Cor. xv.), very much as His manifestation during the forty days following His resurrection was only to His own. But His advent to the earth, with His saints, will be public; for, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. i. 7; Zech. xii. 10); "For as the lightning cometh

forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 27). These, and similar distinctions, are keys to the prophetic Scriptures, and should be carefully observed. This leads us to the thought of—

(b) The "Times of the Gentiles," and Christ's Advent.—We have already seen that these "times," which began with Nebuchadnezzar, and are still running on, shall be brought to an end by the falling of a "Stone" upon the feet of the image. Dr. C. I. Scofield has pointed out that Christ is represented as a Stone three times in Scripture. In relation to Israel, He is the Stumbling Stone; in relation to the Church, He is the Foundation Stone; and in relation to the Gentiles, He is the Smiting Stone: thus Christ is related, as a Stone, to the whole subject of 1 Cor. x. 22. Israel fell over this Stone; but IT is to fall on the Gentiles, bringing the age of their dominion to an end (Dan. ii.).

(c) The Present World-Crisis and Christ's Advent.—We have already said that everything seems to point to the near approach of

the end, which, though we speak with caution of "times and seasons," may well be within the next twenty-five years. In Matt. xxiv. 4-14, there is outlined, by our Lord, the course of this age, with special emphasis upon its latter end. "Many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars. . . . All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." That statement characterises the whole of this present age. Then our Lord goes on to say: These shall be the signs of the approaching "end": nation shall rise against nation; kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places; all these are the beginning of sorrows.

Distinction is drawn between the signs of the end and the signs of the beginning of the end, which latter signs are now finding expression. We cannot believe that the turbulent sea of human and inhuman passions which is so solemn a fact, is to be levelled out in peace, by either force of arms or diplomacy, for any protracted

period, if at all, before Christ comes. There will be a great "mowing down in the bloody swath of this battle's aftermath," and crop of revolution and revenge will follow crop, until the false peace of the Antichrist is made, only to be broken, and the world shall be plunged into its last great war but one. That is not an encouraging outlook; and yet our Lord said: "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh."

What has already been said will have served to show that the Seventieth Seven of Dan. ix. is the link between this Christian Age and the Millennium. We must now briefly consider—

(3) THE MILLENNIAL AGE.—Let us not forget that it is the fact of Christ's Advent which brings about all the changes at this time. By His Return to the Earth the "Times of the Gentiles" is brought to an end; the Day of the Lord is commenced; the "grafted in" branches are "cut off"; the "cut off" branches are "grafted in again;" the Elect Nation sees and repents; Israel and Judah are united; the Davidic Kingdom is

established; and much besides is consummated or inaugurated at this time. Our present purpose is not to study the Millennial Age comprehensively, but, only as regards the position and condition of the Gentiles throughout, and at the end of this period. So first—

(a) **The Position of the Gentiles in the World during this Age.**—We have seen that, in the first Gentile Age, the nations were the non-elect of God, standing by, as it were, while Jehovah prepared Israel for the accomplishment of His designs among them; yet they were by no means wholly passive. We saw also that, in consequence of the unbelief and idolatry of the chosen people, they were set aside and dominion was given to the Gentiles; and further, that when the Jews crucified their Messiah, the Gentile nations were given the position of privilege and responsibility which formerly belonged to the natural seed of Abraham. This position they still hold, and shall hold until Christ comes again.

In this third Gentile Age, which is co-extensive with the Millennium, the nations will be in a position different from that which

they have held in any previous age. On the one hand, they will not be excluded from covenant blessings, as at first; and, on the other hand, they will not, as now, occupy the place of covenant privilege in the stead of After, not before; which is in perfect agree-Israel; but they will occupy the place which the Abrahamic Covenant assigns them under the government of the Messiah, and shall be the recipients of abounding blessings, which shall be mediated through Israel, reunited and restored.

Many are the passages in the Old Testament which predict universal Gentile blessing. For example: "Israel's seed shall inherit the Gentiles"; "the Lord is a Great King over all the earth"; "He shall subdue peoples under Israel, and the nations under their feet"; "the abundance of the sea shall be converted to Israel, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto them"; "the Gentiles shall come to Zion's light, and kings to the brightness of its rising"; "I will make Israel and the places round about My hill a blessing and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing"; "in thee (Abram) shall all the families

of the earth be blessed ”; “ the time cometh that I will gather all nations and tongues ; and they shall come and shall see My glory ” ; “ also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer ; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples ” ; “ He shall judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples ; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

These and such like passages are commonly taken to point to this present age, and the wide diffusion of Christianity, reaching to the ends of the earth. But whatever may be done with such scriptures by way of **application**, they certainly cannot by **interpretation** refer to blessings which accompany the promulgation of the Gospel ; and for a variety of reasons. In the period of blessing predicted, there are two classes, Israel and the nations ; but in this age there are three, “ the Jews, the Gentiles, and the

Church of God.” Again, in that period, blessing is mediated through Israel, not only initially, but continuously; whereas in this age it is the Church which is the medium of blessing to both Jews and Gentiles. Again, in that period, Palestine, Jerusalem, and the Temple are the scenes of the glory of the Messiah, and the centres from which it is diffused; which they certainly are not in this age, for the Land is under Gentile rule; and on Mount Moriah instead of the Temple is the Dome of the Rock.

Again, in that period, the blessings are material as well as spiritual; the lower creation and nature also participate in the new order of things, which certainly is not true of this Christian Age. Moreover, in that period the devil is not abroad, and all weapons of warfare are converted into implements of agriculture, and neither war nor the spirit of it shall be known. Is that true of our own age? Culture, Civilisation, and Christianisation have been at work among men for nigh two thousand years, and have they brought in the Millennium? So far from turning cruel weapons into instruments of

life and labour, we see the ghastly spectacle of the nations turning all available material into instruments of murder, and sapping their ingenuity to devise some new horror of death. Every age of man has ended in pitiable failure, and this much-advertised age of invention, discovery, culture, enterprise, and prosperity shall do the same. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, and Napoleon, have failed; and the only hope of man is the coming of the Christ of God. The Covenant promises of the Old Testament are not now being fulfilled, nor did the Apostles expect them to be; for James, as we have already observed, after speaking of God visiting the Gentiles (in this Christian age), to take out of them (not to take all of them) a people for His name, continues: "**After these things** I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will raise it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and **all the Gentiles**, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known of old." The Spirit therefore, in that age to come, shall be poured out upon **all flesh**, and all men shall see

and share in the glory of God manifested in the Christ. This leads us to consider—

(b) The Relation of the Gentiles to the Messiah during this Age.— We must observe, first of all, that (i.) **During the Millennium Christ shall be King over all the earth.** The exegetical ingenuity which is brought to bear against this fact, so often and plainly stated, is perfectly amazing. Men who will not recognise typical and spiritual teaching **where it does exist**, go to the wildest lengths in insisting upon it where it does not exist. “One of the most remarkable paradoxes of the Church of our times is its abhorrence of materiality in connection with the Kingdom of Christ, and the eternal future, while practically up to its ears in materialism and earthliness.” Yet, if Scripture makes one thing plainer than another, it surely is that the historical Davidic Kingdom, “heavenly in origin, principle, and authority,” is to be set up on the earth; and that the King is to be none other than the One Who, nearly two thousand years ago, rode into Jerusalem to assume the throne, but was handed over, by His own people, to death. What saith the Scripture? “The Lord God shall give unto

Him the throne of His father David ; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” “ The government shall be upon His shoulder. . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. **The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.**” “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” “ I have set my King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

If these, and scores of similar passages, do not mean that Christ is coming in person to rule over this world, then the interpretation of Scripture is hopeless. But facts remain. So we proceed to observe that

(ii.) **The nations of the earth shall serve and worship the Messiah-King for a thousand years.** Think of it ! Compare then with now. Now, sin is rampant and holiness is at a discount ; but then, holiness shall be as uni-

versal as sin is to-day. Now, the nations have their own rulers, some hereditary and some appointed: all more or less detached, suspicious, and jealous of one another; preserving their independence by vast armies and proud fleets; playing at a parliament of the nations; chattering about peace while preparing for war,—this is now; but then, there shall be one King over all the earth, literally and politically, as well as spiritually, and all other rulers shall be by His appointment, and at His disposal. “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord’s.” “In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples; to it shall the Gentiles seek.” “It shall come to pass that every one that is left, of all the nations which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And

it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth **unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts**, even upon them shall be no rain."

A great deal of spiritualising will be required to get rid of the obvious meaning of these words. For our part, we take them at their face value. But we must further observe that

(iii.) **The obedience of multitudes shall be compulsory in that day.** The **Messianic Kingdom** is to be established by power and not by persuasion. We must not imagine that the conversion of the Gentiles in the age to which we refer, carries with it a radical change of heart. The peoples are outwardly and politically subject to the Power which is over all. Multitudes, no doubt, are also changed within, but we read of those who shall yield only feigned obedience. "Say unto God, how terrible art Thou in Thy works; through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies yield **feigned obedience** unto Thee"; "the haters of the Lord should yield **feigned** obedience unto Him; but Israel's time should

endure for ever”; “the **sinner** being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” This notwithstanding, the Millennial Age shall be the happiest in the history of the world, because Christ Himself shall be Sovereign over all. One other point only remains for notice—

(c) The rebellion of the Gentiles under Satan at the close of this Age.—We read that Satan, when he is again “loosed,” shall go out “to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they shall go up on to the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire shall come down from God out of heaven and devour them.” So then, not even in this age does Christ see fully of the travail of His soul; for Satan’s power is not yet destroyed; death is not yet dead; and the wicked have not yet been sentenced. But at the close of the Millennium these things shall be accomplished.

Evil, for the last time, comes into collision with Good; Wrong with Right; Error with

Truth; Satan with Christ; and out of the clash of that great conflict, it is the Good, the Right, the Truth, the Christ, that emerge victorious, not for a time, but for ever. Here is an inspiring vision for such a time as this. Beyond the crass follies of sin, its insolent pride, its bitter antagonism; beyond the terrifying power and ravages of death; beyond the sufferings and sorrows of the ages; and beyond the devil and all his hosts, the Crucified Man of Calvary, the Incarnate Son of God is seen triumphant for ever, the Object of an adoring universe. Glory be to God!

PART C



**THE CHURCH
IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY**

Ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel; whereof I was made a minister. . . . Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.

PAUL.

CHAPTER I

THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH

We have seen that the Divine Spirit has divided men into three classes—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God ; and to gather up all that Scripture has to say concerning each of these, is to get a magnificent view of God's dispensational doings. We now come to the subject of the Church of God ; and shall consider the Revelation, the Expectation, and the Obligation of the Church.

In the former studies we have endeavoured to bring under review the entire testimony of Scripture concerning the subject treated ; and it is not less important that we should do the same with this subject ; so, let us examine first of all—

(1) THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

We begin with—(a) **The Idea and Use of “Church” in the Old Testament.**—The root-idea of the word **Ecclesia**, wherever and however it is used, is a body of **called out ones**. It is by no means a New Testament idea only; its Hebrew equivalent, **qâhâl**, occurs in the Old Testament not less than one hundred and twenty-three times, in the sense of congregation, assembly, multitude, company. The first occurrence of it is in Gen. xxviii. 3, where Isaac said to Jacob: “God Almighty bless thee—that thou mayest be a **multitude** of people.” And its latest occurrence is in Neh. xiii. 1, where we read that “the Moabite should not come into the **congregation** of God for ever.” Wherever the word is found, the idea is present of certain people selected, for some purpose or another, from amongst others. It is in this sense that Stephen speaks of Israel as “the church in the wilderness” (Acts vii. 38). Bearing this in mind, let it be said at once that—

(b) **The Christian Church is never predicted in the Old Testament.**—It is typified, but not predicted. That may seem a startling thing to say, but investigation will prove

it to be true. One of the commonest fallacies of Old Testament commentators is to interpret the blessings and prospects set forth in these Scriptures as belonging to the Church of God ; especially in the prophecies of Isaiah, where Millennial predictions are, without a question, declared to be of the Church. Now we cannot insist too strongly upon the fact that, whereas all the Scriptures are **for us**, they are not all **about us**; and the failure to recognise this has resulted in grave misinterpretation of the prophetic Word. The uniform method of the Spirit in the Old Testament is to view the Kingdom Age in its completeness, entirely disregarding this parenthetical Christian Age.

The perspective of the Old Testament would lead one to think that its predicted events were to be consecutive in their fulfilment. But the course of history has shown that this is not so. The illustration has been used of a range of mountains lying in the line of the eye, and resting, to all appearance, one on the top of the other ; so that, only when the first summit was reached, was it seen that, between it and the further sum-

mit lay a vast valley, with forests, rivers, and cities. In like manner, in the perspective of prophecy all appears to be consecutive, until, having reached the summit of one Age, another is revealed which was wholly out of the scope of the former vision.

Let us now test this principle from Genesis to Malachi. To avoid repetition, let it be said that in the predictions now to be quoted, the **dots** represent this Christian Age, of which nothing is said in the text, and they also separate that part of the prophecy which has been fulfilled, from that which still awaits fulfilment.

Gen. xlix. 10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh come; . . . and unto Him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

Ps. xxii. 1-21 declares the sufferings of the Messiah; and vers. 22-31 tell of the future **Kingdom** glory, when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. For the Kingdom

is the Lord's; and He is the Governor among the nations."

Isa. ix. 6, 7: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: . . . and the government shall be upon His shoulder; of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon **the throne of David**, and upon his kingdom, to establish it."

Isa. xl. 3-4: "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. . . . Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Dan. ix. 26: "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [70 A.D.]; . . . and his **end** shall be with a flood; and even unto the **end** shall be war; desolations are determined."

Zech. ix. 9-10: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is

just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. . . . And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

Mal. iii. 1: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: . . . and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; and the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in."

These seven passages are only illustrative of many, which show that the Age which the prophets had in view was seen in its completeness, and as continuous; there being no revelation of this present Church Age. And with this agrees the New Testament. In 1 Pet. i. 11, we read that the prophets searched "what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ Who was in them did point unto, when He testified beforehand the **sufferings** of Christ, and the **glories** that should follow them." The first mount in their vision was Mount Passion; and the second, rising upon

it apparently, was Mount Glory; but of the long stretch of land lying between these, they knew nothing.

Listen also to the words of our Lord, spoken after His resurrection, but still with the kingdom, and not the Church, in view: "Ought not Christ to have **suffered** these things, and to enter into His **glory**? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 26, 27). Christ, by His ascension, has, for this Age, entered into **His Father's glory**; but He shall enter into His own, only when He comes again.

Yet, once more, we read that our Lord at the commencement of His ministry read in the synagogue, at Nazareth, from Isa. lxi. When He reached the words, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," He "closed the book," and said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Between that utterance and the next clause in ver. 2 of Isa. lxi., the whole of the present Christian Age intervenes; for the "day of vengeance of our God" has not yet come, nor shall, until

Messiah returns to earth. (See Luke iv. 16-22).

In conjunction with all this, take the affirmations of Rom. xvi. 25, 26, Eph. iii. 2-13, Col. i. 25-27, that the "mystery" concerning the Church was not revealed to the Old Testament prophets, but first to Paul, and the evidence is surely complete and conclusive. Thus we affirm that, though the Christian Church is **typified** in the Old Testament, it is nowhere **predicted**. Notwithstanding, in the prophetic survey, room is left for such a dispensation—as for example, in the "many days" of Hos. iii. 4. We cannot however, leave this part of our subject without calling attention again to—

(c) The Distinction between the Church and the Kingdom.—As already stated, the common view is, that the Covenant promises of the Old Testament are now being fulfilled to the Church, consequent upon Israel's failure. That view may seem to throw light upon the present, but, unhappily, it leaves us no light upon the future. Those who spiritualise the kingdom of the Old Testament are expecting and working for the

conversion of the world in this age, so that, ultimately, the whole world must become the Church. But how is this to be brought about? It cannot be possible that the Christianisation of the nations by missionary effort shall bring in the Millennium; but were this the plan, then according to the progress made during the last nineteen centuries it would require thousands of years for its accomplishment.

But such a conception of the Divine purposes is wholly inadequate: for the future kingdom has a political as well as a spiritual aspect; it is to be an absolute monarchy; it is to be universal; it is to rest on a foundation of righteousness; and it is to be characterised by peace. No amount of evangelisation by the Church could ever bring about such an order of things as that: it can only come about by the direct intervention of the God-Man, aided by the hosts of Heaven. The kingdom, then, is not the Church, and the Age of the one is not the Age of the other. By "kingdom," we mean, of course, the Davidic kingdom, and not the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom

of the Son of His love." This Old Testament kingdom, yet to be established, is **earthly**; but the Church is **heavenly**. The kingdom centres in **a nation among the nations**; but the Church is composed of **a people from among all nations**.

The kingdom is established **in the land**; but the Church is seated **in the heavenlies**. The kingdom **is set up**, never built; but the Church is **built**, never set up. The blessings of the kingdom are **material** as well as spiritual; but the blessings of the Church are **spiritual** and not material. The kingdom is to be **universal**; but the Church, as the Word indicates, must be **limited**. The kingdom has Christ as **King**; but the Church has Christ as **Head**. Under the kingdom men are **subjects**; but in the Church believers are **members**. It is inconceivable that there should be such precision of expression and figure distinguishing between these two great subjects if they are one and the same.

The object of the Bible is not to confuse, but to enlighten us: and so, when the Spirit of God uses distinct vocabularies in His portrayal of the various Divine historic purpos-

es, He means that we shall be guided by these into a knowledge of the mind of God. We affirm, therefore, again, that the Church is not a subject of Old Testament prophecy, either in Isaiah or anywhere else; and, side by side with this, let us repeat—this fact does not rob the Christian of a single line of the Old Testament; for although it is not concerning us by **interpretation**, it may all be for us by **application**.

It seems to me that there are at least five great keys which unlock the Scriptures to the devout mind: (1) the key of the **Types**—spiritual things presented in the guise of figure, symbol, or action; (2) the key of the **Dispensations**—the various Ages which go to make up time, and which are distinguishable by the various methods which God employs for the fulfilment of His purposes; (3) the key of the **Advents**—the revelation of two Comings to this earth of God in Christ these constituting the foci around which all history revolves; (4) the key of **Prophecy**—which is history written beforehand, and is a witness to believers and unbelievers alike, that the Scriptures are a Div-

ine revelation, and are inspired; and (5) the key of the **Kingdom** and the **Church**—which are the subjects of Prophecy, the substance of the Types, the explanation of the Dispensations, and the occasion of the Advents. “Lo, these are parts of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him!”

We now pass on to consider—

(2) THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE GOSPELS.

(a) **The Dispensational Point of View of the Gospels.**—In our Bible, by turning over a page, we pass from the Old to the New Testament, without realising, perhaps, what an enormous change has taken place in the four intervening centuries. When we finish the Old Testament we are in the Persian Period, but when we open the New Testament we are in the Roman; and the Grecian Empire rose and fell between. During this interim the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek at the instigation (probably) of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and that Version, called the Septuagint, exercised a great influence upon the New Testament. Furthermore, the Jews were

scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and Palestine was under the rule of Roman deputies. But with all this change, one thing remained the same—the Hebrew hope and outlook. The Jews were still looking for the Messiah and the promised kingdom; so that, in a very real sense, Matthew carries on the sacred story where Malachi left it.

We must never forget that Christ came as the promised Seed, that He came of and to the Jewish nation, and that He came to establish a kingdom upon earth; and although, as we now know, He came for very much more than that, yet His attitude and teaching were distinctively Jewish throughout, and those whom He gathered around Him, and sent forth, were all Jews. This fact is borne out by such passages as: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. xv. 26). And the Apostle Paul says:

“ Now, I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers ” (Rom. xv. 8). We must bear in mind this dispensational fact when we are reading our Lord’s prophetic utterances, and the majority of His parables. The point of view of the Gospels is that of the Old Testament ; and although there are found therein reachings out towards something more, yet that something more was not reached during our Lord’s lifetime upon earth. In this light, many dark passages of the Gospels become luminous.

(b) The Occurrences of the Word “ Church ” in the Gospels.—There is no occurrence whatever in Mark, Luke, or John ; and only two in Matthew. In ch. xvi. 18 we read : “ Upon this rock I will build My Church.” It is most important to observe the context of this declaration. It was **after** our Lord’s claims had been antagonised by the representatives of the nation (ch. xii.) ; after the parables of “ the kingdom of heaven ” had been uttered (ch. xiii.) ; and after Peter had declared that Christ was the

Son of God (xvi. 16). And it was **before** Christ first told His disciples of the decease He was to accomplish at Jerusalem (xvi. 21); and before the manifestation, on the Mount of Transfiguration, of His coming glory. It was in this set of circumstances that He said: "On Myself, the God-Man (the Rock—cf. 1 Cor. iii. 11), I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It must not be overlooked that, from our Lord's standpoint, this is not a declaration of present activity, but of future purpose, and is therefore a prophetic utterance: "**I will** build my Church." Here, for the first time directly, there comes into view the Divine work which was to be accomplished between the sufferings and the glories, and which, as we now know, was to extend across a period of nearly two thousand years. Nothing is said in this passage of the character and constitution of the Church, which, in the nature of the case, would not be revealed before the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ; for, it has been said, a Church before Christ's death would have

been an unredeemed Church; before His resurrection, it would have been without the indwelling Spirit; and before His ascension it would have been a headless body. It can be matter of no surprise that so little is said of the Church by our Lord, for **facts** always precede **doctrines**; and it was not until years after the Church had become a fact, that the doctrine of it was enunciated.

The only other reference to the Church is in Matt. xviii. 17; a passage which is treating of discipline. So far as the principle of procedure in discipline is concerned, this passage holds good for the Christian Church; but whether or not our Lord spoke these words for the **Christian** Church is not certain. In any case, there is nothing here either, as to character or constitution. Having said this, it is important to observe that—

(c) **The Period of the Church is Revealed in the Gospels.**—We have said before that **time-provision** is made in revelation for all the purposes of God, alike those that were at once manifest, and those which were, for a time hidden; and thus it is that, in our

Lord's discourse in Matt. xiii., this present dispensation is brought under review, though there is no reference therein to the Body of Christ.

Before entering upon this chapter, let me say—

(i.) That spirited contention for any exclusive interpretation of these parables is unreasonable and uncharitable. No one view exhausts any Scripture; and although there must always be a **primary** interpretation, there are sure to be others also. This chapter may be viewed in at least three lights. First, the Jewish, as having reference to the chosen nation especially; second, the Christian, as having reference to Christendom throughout this entire Christian Age; and third, the Personal, as having a practical application to the soul's need at all times. The first is the **Prophetical** view; the second is the **Historical**; and the third is the **Spiritual**; and there are large elements of truth in them all.

(ii.) It is open to question whether these parables represent what was to take place **consecutively**, or, whether the last three of

them represent the **inward** aspect of that which, in its **outward** aspect, **is seen in the** first four. There are students on both sides, and we should respect each other's views, while holding our own.

(iii.) Then there are those who affirm that the Church is not within the scope of this chapter; and others, who regard the wheat, and some the pearl, to be the Church. Here, again, we must not be uncharitably dogmatic; for surely, for all of us, there is "yet more light to break forth from His Holy Word." The first principle of all discussion must be, that the debaters are more anxious to arrive at the truth than to gain a victory. It is in this spirit that I offer the following remarks upon this chapter.

Here are found the parables of the "kingdom of the heavens," an expression which occurs thirty-two times in this Gospel, and nowhere else in the New Testament. These parables disclose "the mysteries" of the kingdom of heaven, which refers, I believe, to the state of the kingdom while the King is in heaven; to the whole sphere of Christian

profession, during the absence of the King. This period began with the rejection of the King, and shall end when He returns in glory. If this be correct, the period commenced before the Church was formed, and shall continue awhile after it is "caught up"; but the Church falls within this period, and believers are referred to as "wheat" (25,29), and, perhaps in their corporate capacity as a "pearl" (46).

What, therefore, this chapter sets forth prophetically is, not the Church, but Christendom; although the Church is in Christendom, and is to be taken out of it. It appears to me that the key to the interpretation of these parables is ver. 52 of this chapter: "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure **things new and old.**" These words are spoken of the things which precede, and surely speak of the parables as some **new** and some **old**. But which are old and which are new? In ver. 1, we read that our Lord "went out of the house, and sat by the seaside" and taught; and in ver.

36, "then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house" and taught. Thus the parables are divided into four spoken in public, and three spoken in private; and the evidence goes to show (if ver. 52 is the key) that the first four are the **new** treasures of truth, and the last three are the **old**—that is, truths revealed before. Assuming this, the present Age is presented to our review in a series of seven progressive pictures, describing the course of the kingdom in mystery.

THE NEW THINGS

1. **The Seed and the Soils:** the **Proclamation** of the Kingdom.
2. **The Wheat and the Darnel:** false **Imitation** in the Kingdom.
3. **The Mustard Tree:** wide, visible **Extension** of the Kingdom.
4. **The Leaven in the Meal:** insidious **Corruption** of the Kingdom.

THE OLD THINGS

5. **The Treasure:** the Israelitish Nation.
6. **The Pearl:** the Jewish Remnant during the Tribulation.

7. **The Drag-net:** the Judgment of the Nations at the end of the Tribulation.

With regard to the last three, there are several other interpretations worthy of consideration; but our present object is not to discuss these various views, but to see that this prophetic programme makes room for the development of God's hidden purpose in the Church. That interpretation of this chapter, or any other, which presents the fewest difficulties, and is best supported by history, is in all likelihood, the true interpretation. When we apply that to the subject in hand, we see something of the wonder of this prophecy.

The seed of the Word was sown broadcast, and first of all, by our Lord. From the Apostolic Age and onward much darnel came to be among the wheat, and the sphere of religious profession was entered by those who were not children of God. From the time that Constantine embraced Christianity, and allied it with the State, Christendom became a great tree, in the branches of which much evil was allowed to roost, as it is this day. And from quite early times

the leaven of evil doctrine, and of evil conduct, began its sad work, until now we see "the whole is leavened." That leaven was, first of all, Mysticism, as witness the Essenic and Gnostic heresies of the Sub-Apostolic Age. In the Middle Ages it was Formalism and Superstition, as witness the work and effect of the Papacy; and in our time it is Rationalism, as witness the terrible ravages of the so-called Higher Criticism throughout Europe and the world.

These were all "new" things to the multitude, but they are not the last things. Beyond the present are God's dispensational dealings again with Israel, and His judgment dealings with the world, when, by the agency of angels, the true and the false are to be separated. Meanwhile, the Spirit is gathering out from among all nations a people for the Lord, who constitute His mystical Body.

We now come to the profound and engaging subject—

(3) THE REVELATION OF THE CHURCH IN THE ACTS, EPISTLES, AND APOCALYPSE.

It will not be possible here to do more than map out the field of truth presented in these twenty-three books; but if what is said encourages any to a fuller study of this important theme, a good purpose will have been served. Let us, therefore, consider the subject from three points of view: (1) Historically, in the Acts; (2) Mystically, in the Epistles; and (3) Prophetically, in the Apocalypse.

(a) THE CHURCH VIEWED HISTORICALLY—THE ACTS.

From some standpoints the Book of the Acts is the most important in the entire Divine Library, and one cannot too often, or too carefully study it. One or two considerations will bear this out.

(i.) The Church and Pentecost.

There was no Christian Church before the Day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Spirit was sent from the Father. Believers there were before (John xiii. 10), but these had in no sense become corporate. That day of Pentecost, therefore, was the birthday of the Church, when all the believing units

were constituted an **Ecclesia**, a Spiritual Body, by the Baptism of the Spirit (Acts ii.; 1 Cor. xii. 13). It must not be imagined that those who were first to share the blessings of this new dispensation were aware of the character and purpose of those blessings. Indeed, the history clearly shows that they were not; but then, as always, the **fact** preceded the **doctrine**. The Church became a fact by an act; but the doctrine of the Church was slowly developed, as was its organisation. Consider, therefore, further—

(ii.) **The Church and Judaism.**—With the introduction of the new order of things, the old order did not suddenly come to an end, for there are no ruptures in the Divine economies. It is this fact that makes the Acts so important a book; for therein we see one order of things passing away, and another order of things slowly developing. Those who see nothing but the Church in the Acts are mistaken; and those who see there nothing but the latter end of Judaism are also mistaken: for in this book the Church and Judaism are seen side by side, the one, less and less; and the other, more

and more. That is true of Judaism and Christianity what John said of himself and his Master: "I must decrease, but He must increase." Nor could this have been otherwise. The Apostles and the believing Jews could not have been suddenly uprooted from all their Judaic or Mosaic training and traditions. New Testament psychology reveals that there may take place in one a marvelous and sudden change of mind and affection—Saul, for example—but the soul's readjustment with its entire world, in consequence of that change, is progressive, and often slow.

So, here. After Pentecost we find the Jewish believers attending the Temple services (iii. 1); exercising ministry only among themselves (ii. 41-47); and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. With regard to this last, it is impossible to compare the sermon of Peter, preached on the Day of Pentecost, with that of Paul, preached at Antioch in Pisidia, without seeing how radically different are their points of view. Peter's point of view is the kingdom (iii. 19-26); but Paul's, is the Church (xiv. 27):

and it is just a question whether Peter ever fully understood the revelation which had been given to Paul (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 16). During the first seven years of the Church's history, that is, up to the martyrdom of Stephen, it was a Jewish Church; and it was only after their dispersion from Jerusalem, following on that persecution (viii. 1-4), and after the vision vouchsafed to Peter (ch. x.), together with his visit to Cornelius, that that exclusivism began to break down, and the real significance of the new age began to dawn (ch. xv.). This introduces the thought of—

(iii.) **The Church and the Gentiles.**—As just indicated, there is no evidence that the Gentiles were appealed to in any way, previous to the martyrdom of Stephen; but after that, the door was opened to them more and more widely, until the Church, which at the beginning was wholly Jewish, was, at the end of the first generation, largely Gentile. The story of the Acts is, therefore, in three parts, in fulfilment of our Lord's commission in ch. i. 8. Part i. The Witness in Jerusalem; only **Jewish**: chs. i-vii. Part ii. The

Witness in Judæa and Samaria; a **Transition** period: chs. viii.-xii. Part iii. The Witness to the uttermost part of the earth, mostly **Gentile**: chs. xiii.-xxviii. The story which begins in Jerusalem, ends in Rome, and the passage is made by way of Antioch in Syria; thus comprehensively and graphically is recorded the first generation of Church History. Consider—

(b) THE CHURCH VIEWED MYSTICALLY—THE EPISTLES.—A nation's literature is always as significant as its history, and they are vitally related. Of what supreme importance, therefore, must be the literature of the Church, that is, the New Testament Epistles. To trace how the history and the literature interact upon one another is a fascinating study, but outside our present enquiry. If in the Acts we have the **history** of the Church, in the Epistles we have its **doctrine**. In the one, we have the **outward**, and in the other the **inward** development. It is, then, to the Epistles that we must turn for a knowledge of the true character of the Christian Church; so, let us consider, first—

(i.) **The Church in relation to the World.**

As we have already said, the very word "church" should have prevented men from talking about the conversion of the world in this Age; for, if the world were converted, the Church would cease to be; or, at any rate, the word would cease to have any significance. The name itself indicates that those who compose the Church are "called out" from the world, and are no longer of it, though having a mission to it. Our Lord, in His intercessory prayer (John xvii.), said, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men whom Thou gavest me **out of the world** (6). These are **in the world** (11). I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world (15). **They are not of the world** (16). **I have sent them into the world** (18)." The relation to one another of the Church and the world could not possibly be stated with greater clearness than in these words, which give no remote hint of a **converted** world; for such a thing was not in the scope of the Divine purpose for this age. The Church of to-day would be well advised to study the dispensational purposes

of God, and to fulfil her mission, so sadly belated, and **evangelise** the world in this generation. Consider, further—

(ii.) **The Church in relation to the Kingdom.—**

We speak of course of the Davidic kingdom (Luke i. 31-33). It has been shown already that the subject of the Old Testament and the Gospels is not the Church, but the kingdom; and that the truth about the former was not revealed until some years after the Day of Pentecost. Further evidence of this is furnished in the Epistles of Paul. Read carefully Rom. xvi. 25-27; Eph. iii. 1-11; Col. i. 24-29, where this subject is spoken of as a “mystery” which had been hidden from previous ages, and was first made known to the great Apostle to the Gentiles. The “mystery” (something which only the initiated understand) was, that Jew and Gentile alike, by faith in Christ crucified and risen are constituted a Body for Christ, by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); and that Christ dwells in us, “the hope of glory.” Thus, the Church’s calling is **heavenly**; her constitution is

mystical; and her inheritance is **spiritual**; all of which points are in contrast with the kingdom facts. But this has already been brought under review; so we pass to the consideration, summarily, of—

(iii.) **The Church in relation to Christ.**

This is indicated in the Epistles of Paul by three figures, namely, a **Building** (Eph. ii. 20-22; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 4-7); a **Body** (Eph. i. 23, iv. 4; 1 Cor. xii.); and a **Bride** (Eph. v. 29-32; Rev. xix. 6-9). Each of these figures is used to express some distinct aspect of the Divine grace and purpose. Thus, the Building is for the **Habitation** of Christ; the Body is for the **Manifestation** of Christ; and the Bride is for the **Glorification** of Christ. How full and precious is this teaching about the Church, for whose sake Christ has been made “Head over all things!” [I know that some able students of Scripture do not believe that the Church is the Bride; and about this I do not dogmatise, being more concerned to know the truth than to hold a “view.”] We now come to our last consideration—

(c) THE CHURCH VIEWED PROPHETICALLY—THE APOCALYPSE.

Here again I do not enter into controversy, but state my view-point. The "Revelation," being the last book in the Bible, gathers up into itself all that has gone before, and shows how the Divine purposes are to be consummated. We shall find, therefore, that all our previous studies are here—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.

In chs. ii., iii. the whole course of the Christian Church is set forth prophetically from the Apostolic Age to the Second Advent.

This prophetic outline is presented in a series of Letters written to seven of the Asian Churches, the selection being made according to the fitness of the assemblies to represent what God foresaw would be the course of the Church.

The course outlined in these chapters has its place in the period presented in Matt. xiii., but is not there revealed.

We have here, then, seven aspects of the Church, with seven distinct characteristics,

and marking seven periods throughout the Christian Age.

Before summarising these, let it be said that there are four things which we should bear in mind in the study of this subject. First, that these were actual churches in Asia at the close of the first century, and that these letters were sent to them. Second, that, as already indicated, these letters outline the history of the Church from the Apostolic Age to the end. Third, that the characteristics of all these Churches may be found in the Age represented by each of them respectively. And fourthly, that all these features characterise, most probably, the members of every Christian community throughout the whole history of the Church. With that in mind, let us now rapidly examine these aspects of the Church.

This wonderful prophetic unveiling of the spiritual history of the Christian Church has now, almost entirely, become history, and everything points to the speedy close of the dispensation. The day of Grace is drawing to an end, and the day of Government is about to open. How the scene of Rev. iii.

becomes the scene of ch. iv., now remains to be considered.

(i.) There is, first of all, the **Ephesian aspect** of the Church, with **Spiritual Declension** as its characteristic. "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Declension always begins there; and the first generation of the Church had not passed before evidence had been given of a falling away from the simplicity, zeal, and love which were such conspicuous features of the early years. The **period** represented by this aspect, is the Apostolic Age, roughly speaking, to the close of the first century.

(ii.) Then follows the **Smyrnean aspect**, with **Patient Endurance** as its characteristic. The Jews greatly persecuted the Church at Smyrna; but throughout they remained true to Christ, and patiently suffered. The Lord beholds this with pleasure; and, although the Church was not perfect, He has no word of complaint against them. The **period** represented by this Church is, approximately, the first four centuries, which are commonly regarded as the age of martyrdom, and during which there appear to have

been ten different seasons of persecution in the Roman world.

(iii.) And now, the **Pergamite aspect**, with **False Toleration** as its characteristic. The charge against this Church was, that "thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam . . . so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes." It was not that the Church held these doctrines, but that they gave place to those who did. This community, therefore, represents the age of patronage in Church history, the **period** extending from the fourth to the sixth, or seventh centuries, during which the Church and State became allied.

(iv.) Thereafter follows the **Thyatiran aspect** with **Shameful Corruption** as its characteristic. "That woman Jezebel" was the curse of this community; and represents, in the history of the Church, the Papal system, and all that shared in its corrupt doctrines and practices. The **period**, therefore, represented by this Church is, what we call the Dark Middle Ages, reaching from the sixth to the sixteenth century, and concerning which Lecky, in his "History of European

Morals," says, "The Dark Ages, as the period of Catholic ascendancy is justly called, should probably be placed in all intellectual virtues lower than any other period in the history of mankind."

(v.) After this comes the **Sardian aspect**, with **Imperfect Works**, and a lifeless name as its characteristics. There is a strange mingling here of praise and blame, pointing to strong cross currents in the life of the Church. These features represent in a remarkable way the **period** of the Reformation, or the Age of Protestantism, covering the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The sixteenth century Reformation was a magnificent but not perfect work, and, as history proves, "the Church lapsed more and more into formalism, stagnation, and unbelief."

(vi.) Then follows the **Philadelphian aspect**, with **Spiritual Revivals** and **Evangelical Movements** as its characteristics. Pre-eminently does this Church represent the **period** of Modern Missions, and the great sending and spreading of the Gospel, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Truly

these have been the time of the "open door," and the hour of the Church's opportunity.

(vii.) Finally, there is the **Laodicean aspect** with **Lifeless Indifference** as its characteristic. It was of Divine design that this was the last Church of the seven to receive a message from the Risen Lord; for it was intended to illustrate what would be the state of Christendom at the latter end. This aspect, therefore, represents the **period** upon which we have now entered, and which is the final phase of our history. Its words, therefore, should be of inestimable value to every child of God.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPECTATION OF THE CHURCH

The Apostle Paul prays that the Ephesians might know "what is the hope of their calling," that is, what is the prospect which the Redeemer has set before them, and us. This leads us to the consideration of the Expectation of the Church.

Let us follow out the subject along three lines—namely, the Foundation, the Fore-shadowing, and the Fulfilment of our Hope.

(1) THE FOUNDATION OF OUR HOPE.

This of course, is the word of promise that Christ **shall come again**. On this point the testimony of Scripture is ample, and should be conclusive. There is a fourfold testimony which must ever prove satisfying to the believer, and disconcerting to the unbeliever: the testimony of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of Angels, and of the Church. This fourfold

witness leaves nothing further necessary in the way of proof that our Lord is to return; yet it is worth observing that in twenty-four of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament witness is borne to this truth, directly or indirectly; and in one of the remaining three books (2 John 8), there is a reference to "rewards," which, read in the light of what this Apostle says elsewhere, assumes the Coming. The two books in which there is no reference are, Philemon and 3 John. With these exceptions, a chain of evidence can be found from Matthew to Revelation, that Christ is again to appear in grace, and for judgment. For our own assurance, comfort, and use, let us follow this line.

(a) The Gospels and Acts (History).
—Matt. xvi. 27; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xviii. 8; John xiv. 3; Acts i. 11.

(b) The Epistles (Doctrine) Pauline.—Rom. xiii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 2 Cor. i. 14; Gal. v. 5; Eph. iv. 30; Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. i. 9, 10; 2 Thess. ii. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Titus ii. 12, 13; Heb. x. 37.
Catholic—Jas. v. 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 13; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 9, 10; 1 John iii. 2, 3; 2 John 8; Jude 21 (14).

(c) The Revelation (Apocalypse) i. 7, xxii. 20.

To these passages fifteen score of others could be added, about the meaning of which no doubt could ever have arisen, had there been no disposition to argue away a truth which had become unwelcome. But in spite of all that has been said and written to the contrary—

Christ is not a disappointment !
He is coming by and by :
In my heart I have the witness
That His Coming draweth nigh.
All the scoffers may despise me,
And no change around may see ;
But He tells me He is Coming,
And that's quite enough for me.

His word of promise is the foundation of the heart's hope ; and while heaven and earth shall pass away, His Word shall not pass away. Further, let us think for a moment of—

(2) THE FORESHADOWING OF OUR HOPE.

Here we must bring four passages in the Old Testament into connection with four in

the New Testament; and we shall at once see that, away back in the time of Moses, our Lord's Second Advent was typified.

(a) Lev. xvi. 11: "Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin-offering, which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself."

(b) Lev. xvi. 12a: "He shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small."

(c) Lev. xvi. 12b: "And bring it within the veil."

(d) Ex. xxviii. 33-35: "Upon the skirts of it (the robe of the ephod) thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the skirts thereof: and bells of gold between them round about: . . . and it shall be upon Aaron to minister; and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

You will mark that in the first of these

passages we learn of the High Priest's work at the brazen altar in the outer court of the Tabernacle; in the second, of his passage through the Holy Place; in the third, of his entrance into the Holiest of All; and in the fourth, of his return to the people who were waiting without. That is, the order of his work was—

The Offering of the **Sacrifice**.

The Performance of the **Service**.

The Ministry of **Supplication**.

The Return and announcement of full **Salvation**.

Let us now turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is shown that Christ is the fulfilment of all the symbols and ceremonies of the old economy, the Antitype of its Sanctuary, Services, and Sacrifices; and we shall see what is the final interpretation of the passages just quoted—

(a) Heb. ix. 14: "Christ offered Himself without blemish unto God."

(b) Heb. x. 5-7: "When He cometh into the world, He saith, . . . A body didst Thou

prepare for Me; . . . lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

(c) Heb. ix. 24: "Christ entered into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us."

(d) Heb. ix. 28: "Christ shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation."

These four passages in Hebrews correspond with the four in Leviticus, each with each. In both groups the truths are present of Sacrifice, Service, Supplication, and Salvation; but in the Antitype there is a very significant change of the order—the Service precedes the Sacrifice; Christ's ministry preceded His death. The reason for this is, that in the case of the high priest of old, it was necessary that a Sacrifice be offered for **himself** as well as for the people, because he, equally with each of them, was a sinner. But of Him whom Aaron prefigured, it is written: "He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's." So, He served first, and then died.

The historical order of Christ's ministry is not the order of our apprehension of it. As sinners, we do not begin at Bethlehem, and follow Him to Calvary; but we must begin at Calvary, and from that starting-point, looking backward, He has left us an example that we should follow His steps; and looking forward, He has set before us a wonderful prospect. He who served and sacrificed has entered into heaven itself, **now to appear in the presence of God for us.** This utterance is explained by such others as, "He ever liveth **to make intercession for us**" (Heb. vii. 25; Rom. viii. 33, 34). But we read of Aaron, that he came out again to the waiting people: and of Christ, that "He shall appear a second time, unto salvation, to them that wait for Him:" This, of course, has not yet been fulfilled; but only awaits the day of His Advent, that day when He shall emerge from the Holiest of All, having been hidden for nigh two thousand years, and shall proclaim to us and perform in us **full salvation**, even that salvation which is "ready to be revealed in the last time." Whether Heb. ix. 28 has any reference to Christ's coming to the air, or to the

earth, and whether by it we are to understand that He is coming for all His Church, or only for the expectant ones, in no way interferes with the truth beneath any of these views, namely, that He is coming again to perfect the salvation which He has commenced, in fulfilment of the Aaronic foreshadowing. But what about—

(3) THE FULFILMENT OF OUR HOPE.

“Where is the promise of His Coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as from the beginning of the creation” (2 Pet. iii. 4). The answer is, “He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “Be not ignorant of this one thing, that with the Lord a thousand years is as one day” (Heb. x. 37; 2 Pet. iii. 8). It is perfectly true that the first generation of Christians expected the Lord to come in their time; but it is not true, which is so constantly affirmed, that they were mistaken and misled. Our Lord did not tell His followers when He would return; but bade them WATCH, so that the only true attitude of the faithful in every generation is to look

for Him **in their time**. There are many thousands of Christians who, to-day, are not expecting to see death, but are looking for the Coming of their Beloved. Are they misled, and mistaken? Surely, if that were the case with the first two generations, the error would not have been perpetuated for eighteen hundred years! Yet, it is not too much to say that there is a great revival of belief in this Advent promise, in our time; and those who find in it a daily inspiration to life and service, are not conscious of doing violence either to Scripture or reason. Ours would not be a "blessed hope" if it were not a true hope; but it is true, for He who has promised to come will come, and will not for ever tarry: and, so far as we know, there is nothing to hinder the immediate return of our Lord, unless it be the unfaithfulness of His Church.

CHAPTER III

THE OBLIGATION OF THE CHURCH

In conclusion we must call attention to the Obligation of the Church.

This is threefold. It is an obligation—

(1) TO KNOW.—The Spirit of revelation is to be sought, “that we may know what is the hope of His calling.” Bible students are perfectly familiar with the important distinction between the words **oida** and **ginôskô**, both of which are translated “to know” in the New Testament. The first refers to knowledge which is objective, or from without. The second refers to that which is subjective, or experimental. They are not interchangeable, and are everywhere used with perfect discrimination. When we speak of the Christian being under the obligation **to know**, we mean, of course, first of all, the knowledge to be derived from

without, from the study of the Scriptures, and in the passage quoted (Eph. i. 18), it is **oida** and not **ginôskô** which is used. The latter must always be the product of the former, so that nothing can be a substitute for the careful and repeated study of the Word, on this or any other subject. Do the Lord's people **know** all that they might about His promised Return? There follows the obligation—

(2) TO BE.— We are not to be satisfied with an intellectual apprehension of truth; that which we come to know must be transmuted into character. Figuratively, the knowledge in the mind must drop a foot, and take possession of the heart; or, to change the metaphor, instead of its being as wings on which to rise, it will be as a millstone about our necks. We are **to be** the truth, as well as to **know** it; and it is only as knowledge gives shape to character that our capacity to know is increased. But even this is not all. There is also the obligation—

(3) TO DO.— If **Enlightenment** leads to **Character**, the latter should be productive of **Service**. “If ye **know** these things, happy

are ye if ye **do** them." We are to observe to do. We are not to be "forgetful hearers," but doers of the Word. Let the order of these things be marked. Too many, it is to be feared, begin at the service end, and work towards knowledge; but such a course can only bring disaster. Service is the final and not the first expression of truth; and the best service is that which rests upon the widest and soundest knowledge. I pray that these studies in Prophecy and History may have opened up to some, new fields of knowledge; but I sincerely trust that they may also be productive of character, and may eventuate in service with which Christ can be well pleased.